



**Vlajko Palavestra**  
**LEGENDS**  
**OF OLD**  
**SARAJEVO**



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LEGENDS  
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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Sarajevo is a city which was founded by the Turks and on which their four centuries-long rule has left its mark. During the process of the formation of oriental urban settlements in Bosnia, in the second half of the 15th, and the first half of the 16th, two components emerge—the earlier dervish period, when the establishment of hospices and inns led to the growth of small towns, and the later period of Osmanli state organization. The significant role played by hospices and devishes, who brought with them Islamic mysticism, was reflected also in folk traditions which emerged together with the development of the towns and which have survived until the present day as a specific witness to times gone by. It is therefore understandable that the majority of the legends of old Sarajevo are connected with the life, events and people of the Turkish period.

The tradition of oral story telling, including the legends, was sometimes formed in such a way that older stories, recollections of people and events, memories and reminiscences, were supplemented and enriched by traditional elements from the large fund of much older and more widely spread oral tradition, the epic poetry, the customs, and especially the folk beliefs and superstitions which were

an integral part of the everyday life of the people of that time. Thus in the oral tradition of old Sarajevo we find reflections of actual recollections of specific individuals and events, which have a historical background, transformed into something new, together with widely known motifs taken from local, and not only local, folk tradition, superstitions, beliefs in mythical beings, mystical events and signs, dreams and premonitions. There is no doubt that over the centuries the at one time, probably much richer repertoire of Sarajevo oral narrative tradition has been forgotten and, for us today, lost; so that what we have before us, set down in the form of succinct, and often occasional notes, is very likely only the smaller part, that which has survived oblivion as a result of, to us, inexplicable choices made by folk beliefs and traditional culture. The ignoring or unconscious suppression of details, even of entire past events, of individual people and their deeds, the substitution or disregarding of portions of historical reality and various real personalities, the altering of motifs and the muddling of chronology—all these characterize the oral folk tradition in general, but a core of historical truth is almost always present. The legends of old Sarajevo possess all of these essential characteristics of folk narration.

The legends of old Sarajevo are a harmonious combination of themes from the oral prose tradition of the native population of the pre-Islamic period, and a powerful, even dominant influence of traditions of Islamic-Oriental origin. On the one hand we have the memory of »accursed« Jerina, beliefs in buried treasu-



re, in footprints and handprints preserved in stone, stories about milk flowing down from the mountains through pipes, of the minaret which ran away from its mosque, of war stratagems and betrayals, and other elements known over the entire Serbo-Croat speaking area, but also to other peoples. On the other hand, legendary motifs of **šehids**, **evlis**,<sup>1</sup> turbes, genies, and mythical creatures are indubitably of Oriental and Islamic origin. Numerous instances of Oriental beliefs are to be found in Sarajevo legends. The belief in **evlis**, which has deep roots in the metaphysics and theosophy of the Orient, and especially in Moslem **tesavuf** (mysticism) was wide spread in old Sarajevo. Sarajevo stories even contain themes borrowed from the folklore of Eastern (Turkish) peoples.

Broadly speaking, the oral tradition of the older period of Sarajevo's history is preserved in a number of topographical names, admittedly only in recollections and stories of older generations. The one-time names of parts of the old city, of **mahalas**, streets and squares, and of various buildings, are slowly being replaced by the modern names for new settlements, roads and districts.

In making this selection of legends of old Sarajevo, and within the limitations of space, I have rewritten or freely interpreted the original texts of published legends, endeavouring to preserve their essential substance. I have classified the material according to the relatedness of individual examples, the complexity and many-layered character of certain, even

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: Islamic martyrs; holy men.



extremely short narratives, as well as for the sake of better insight into, and easier orientation within, the material itself.

Sarajevo, 1982.

Note: In the text that follows Roman numerals indicate the titles of individual groups of legends. The texts themselves are numbered 1-85. After each text I provide (i) bibliographical data concerning the sources, and (ii) essential commentary.

## I. EARLIER SETTLEMENTS AND THEIR OLD NAMES

### 1. The Golden Valley

In the past, before the Turks conquered Bosnia, Sarajevo was called the »Golden Valley«, because of its great beauty and wealth. Still today there is in Sarajevo a hill called **Zlatište** (the Golden) where, so the story goes, gold was once mined.

(i) Živković M., **Sarajevo od svog postanka do danas** (Sarajevo from Its Origins to the Present Day), Požarevac, 1894, p. 7; Suljagić S., **Zanimljivosti iz planinskih krajeva oko Sarajeva** (Places of Interest in the Mountains around Sarajevo), Novi Behar, IX, №. 9-13, p. 136.

(ii) Lukarić, the Dubrovnik historian, wrote at the beginning of the 17th century about the beginnings of mining in Bosnia and in the environs of Sarajevo, probably basing himself on folk tradition. As far as we know today, there was no mining in the area of old Sarajevo, the tradition in this case endeavours to emphasize the wealth and beauty of old Sarajevo at the time of the independent Bosnian State.

### 2. Hidden Treasure

To the east of Sarajevo there was a fortress called »the Old Castle,« which was built by



»Accursed Jerina« before the coming of the Turks. All male persons were required to contribute three litres of gold towards its building. Even today, it is said, there is buried treasure in the ruins of this castle, which is situated near the village of Hodidjed at Bulog. A blue flame is said to burn above it on the eve of Lady Day.

(i) Ivančević S., **Stari grad (The Old Castle)**, **Bos. Vila II**, Sarajevo, 1887, p. 283.

(ii) The medieval fortress of Hodidjed was already in Turkish hands during the first half of the 15th century, while its origins have nothing to do with Irina (Jerina) Cantacuzene, wife of the Serbian despot Đurđe Branković (1427—1456), who was popularly called »accursed« because so many castles were built in her husband's time.

### 3. King Dobrobić

Long ago a travel writer, who stayed in Sarajevo, noted that the ancient Greek and Roman writers had described Sarajevo and its fortress in the following manner, »This place was first built as a fortress above a canyon by a king named Dobrobić. It consisted at first of 10—15 huts, in which he left some 300 soldiers in this desolate place to guard the passage through the canyon. But since the air and water there were good, the population multiplied and newcomers arrived; they planted vineyards and gardens and built houses, so that the settlement grew into a small town. King Dobrobić built a castle for their protection.«

(i) Čelebija E., **Putopis (Journeys)**, Sarajevo, 1954, p. 113.



(ii) The above-mentioned writer, Evlija Čelebija (1611—1682), was a famous 17th-century Turkish traveller. The name of the king may be read as »Dubrobik«, »Dobrobić«, etc., but should properly be »King Dubrovnik«. Following folk tradition, the writer aspired to ascribe the origins of various places to well-known figures of the nearer or more distant past who had no actual connection with the place in question. It is important to emphasize that a Dubrovnik merchant colony may have existed in medieval Vrhbosna, and Evlija may have heard something of this from the local people and simply invented King Dobrobić.

#### 4. The Neighborhood of Falcons

But the people tell a different story, saying that the Sarajevo fortress originated in Turkish times and was called **Šahin Džiran** (Neighborhood of Falcons) and that Ali Pasha Skopljak surrounded it with walls 250 years ago. He whitewashed the fortifications so that the town looked like a pearl.

(i) Traljić S., **Narodna tradicija o sarajevskom gradu** (Popular Traditions about Sarajevo), **Islamski svijet**, III, Sarajevo, 1934, №. 79, p. 18.

(ii) When the Austrians attacked Sarajevo in 1697 it became clear that the small Sarajevo fortress was unsuitable for defense. Somewhat later it was extended and modernized. The Bosnian Vizier, Ahmed Pasha Skopljak, began the work in 1729 and used in the walls many stone monuments from the Moslem and Christian cemeteries. The work was finished between 1736 and 1740. Historical sources do

not indicate that the fortress was called »Šahin Džiran«.

## 5. The Builders of the Seray

Popular tradition has it that, after the Turks had conquered Bosnia, on the site of present day Sarajevo a **Seray** (palace) was built by the Turkish general Isa Beg — some say Gazi Husref Beg, while others insist that it was Soko Mehmed Pasha. Sarajevo acquired its present name from that palace.

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Esnafi i obrti u Bosni i Hercegovini I (Esnafs and Trades in Bosnia and Herzegovina I)**, Zbornik za narodni život i običaje, XXX, Zagreb, 1935, p. 56; Traljić S., **Sarajevski grad Vratnik (The Sarajevo Fortress of Vratnik)**, Sarajevo, 1937, p. 5.

(ii) There is no historical evidence that Isa Beg Ishaković had a permanent residence here. The »palace« was probably a building in which he, or some other deputy, temporarily resided while staying at Vrhbosna. Tradition says that the Seray was situated where the Begluk later stood (the present site of the local Military Headquarters).

## 6. Latinluk

This was the name of a **mahala** (quarter of the city), in old Sarajevo, where the Catholics lived. The Dubrovnik merchants had their colony there, while the remaining inhabitants of this **mahala** were for the most part also Catholics, who had their own church there until 1697. The Latinkul was situated south of today's JNA Street. The name of this **mahala**



was long preserved in the name of the Latin Bridge (today's Princip Bridge).

(i) Čelebija E., **Putopis (Journies)**, p. 117.

(ii) An official census of the Sarajevo Christians in 1788 mentions that there were in the city 12 **mahalas** in which Christians lived. The most populous was the Frankluk, or Latinluk as it was locally know.



## II. THE CONQUEST OF VRHBOSNA AND STORIES ABOUT THE CONQUERORS

### 7. The Sultan's Spring

When the time came for Bosnia to be conquered and the Osmanli power to be extended, the Turks stormed into Bosnia. One day at about noon their army stopped to prepare lunch in a plain not far from Sarajevo. But there was no water anywhere in the vicinity. Then a soldier dug into the earth, and water began to run. Sultan Fatih (Mehmed the Conqueror) ordered that a fountain be built in that place, which today is still known as the Sultan's Spring. The Sultan said a special prayer for the soldier who had found the water, asking that he be happy, both he and his descendants. The Sarajevo people called that soldier Dovadžija, which is the origin of this Sarajevo surname.

(i) Suljagić S., op. cit., p. 302; Kreševljaković H., **Vodopadi i gradnje na vodi u starom Sarajevu (Waterworks of Old Sarajevo)**, p. 13.

(ii) A Turkish presence in the area of medieval Vrhbosna is recorded for the years 1436 and 1439, although from 1416 until 1448 the Turks held the fortress of Hodidjed and its surroundings for shorter or longer periods. The ruins of Hodidjed are situated some two and a half hours' walk to the east of Sarajevo. A Christian army retook Hodidjed from the

Turks in 1434, but it fell again into Turkish hands, and until 1459 was the Turks' vanguard fortress in the Bosnian lands.

Historical sources provide no evidence that on the territory of old Sarajevo there existed a fortified town of Vrhbosna, as certain historians have claimed. However, in the Vrhbosna or Vrhbosanja **župa** (district) there did exist an unwalled urban settlement, town or market of the same name known as Trgovište or Utornik (that is, Tuesday Market). It is still not known when this town was founded. It is first mentioned in 1462 as **Atik Varoš** (Old Town) though at that time it had already fallen into Turkish hands. In 1468 it is mentioned as **Eski Trgovište** (Old Market), which most likely was known locally simply as the Market, an unwalled urban settlement of a type common in the Middle Ages. This settlement lay at the point where the Koševo stream enters the river Miljacka.

The medieval villages on the territory of present-day Sarajevo were Pohvalići (today Požalići), Koševo, Nahorevo, Bjelave, Radonje and Radilović on the slopes to the north, and Brodac, Bratnik (today Vratnik) and more distant Hvaletići (Faletići). We know the names of a number of localities on the slopes of Trebević: lower down there were Komatin and Bilavica (Bjelavica), Toplik on the very bank of Miljacka, and probably also Hrvatin, Hrid and Bistrik, although these are not mentioned in the sources.

Mehmed II, the Conqueror (1429—1481), Turkish Sultan 1451—1481, extended the Ottoman power to cover the entire Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor. Exploiting the disagreements



and internal struggles of the feudal rulers, as well as the difficult position of the serfs in the medieval Bosnian State, he overran Bosnia in the spring of 1463 and turned it into a Turkish province as he had done with the Serbian despotate. He lived on in the memory of the Bosnian people as **el Fatih**, the Conqueror.

The Sultan's Spring is situated on mount Romanija, east of Sarajevo, but it is not known when the actual fountain was built.

## 8. A Military Stratagem

Once upon a time the Greeks ruled an old town near Sarajevo. On the above-mentioned plain the Turkish army came upon a certain Staniša Golić who advised them that if they wished to capture the Old Castle, every soldier should light a number of fires, so that those in the Castle would think that an enormous army was attacking. In the evening the Turks did just this, lighting thousands of fires, so that the garrison of the Castle took fright and fled. In the morning the Turks offered up prayers for this victory at the place which to-day is called Dovlići, while the village called Pale took its name from the fact that there the Turks lit their fires.<sup>1</sup> This is the story, but let him who told it be answerable for it.

(i) Čerović B., **Od kuda su imena Dovlići i Pale** (The Origins of the Names Dovlići and Pale), *Bos. vila*, IX, 1894, p. 198; Truhelka Č., **Iz prošlosti Sarajeva** (From Sarajevo's Past), *Nada I*, Sarajevo, 1895, p. 263.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: Serbo-Croat »paliti« = English »to light.«



(ii) There are many popular stories about Greek rulers in the wider Bosnia-and-Herzegovina area. The military stratagem described here represents a part of the widely-known repertoire of the oral folk tradition concerning the conquerors. Finally, folk etymology frequently finds the origin of certain names through lexical similarities, as is the case here.

## 9. The Conquest of the Golden Valley

After capturing the Old Castle, the Conqueror led his army in the conquest of the Golden Valley, as Sarajevo was then called. He began the battle with the Bosnian army on the north side of the town. The Sultan saw the enemy there and shouted, »Kos! Kos!« which means »Run! Run!« — since when the entire area has been known as Koševo. Then the Sultan divided his army into two **hisetas** (parts), providing the names of two old streets of the town — Upper Hiseta and Lower Hiseta.

(i) K. T. N., **Kako je postalo Sarajevo (The Origins of Sarajevo)**, Bos. Vila, XXVI, Sarajevo, 1911, p. 119.

(ii) This story is an example of popular etymology and naive interpretation of the origins of certain toponyms. The name »Koševo« certainly dates from the Middle Ages.

## 10. The Sultan in the »Seray«

When the Turks took the Golden Valley it was already autumn. Frosts, snow and blizzards had already started. The army was under canvas, while the Sultan took shelter in a dilapidated hut in order not to freeze. His adju-

tants and viziers said to him, »Forgive us, o mighty Lord and Master, we must put you into this peasant shelter at least, to keep you from the wind.« The Sultan answered them, »This is a **seray** for me, it is shelter enough!« In this way the town derived its name from the Sultan's use of the word **seray**.

(i) K. T. N., op. cit., p. 119.

(ii) The alleged battle in the so-called Golden Valley and the Sultan's accommodation in a poor peasant hut have enabled the folk story teller to explain the origin of Sarajevo's name in an interesting and unusual way.



### III. WARRIORS AND ISLAMIC MARTYRS

#### 11. The Conqueror's Masons

The popular tradition has it that the army of Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror, was accompanied by 12,000 stonemasons who carved the gravestones of the soldiers who fell in battle. All surviving old Moslem gravestones in Bosnia are said to mark the graves of members of the Conqueror's army who died for the Moslem faith.

(i) Nametak A., **Islamski kulturni spomenici u BiH** (Islamic Cultural Monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina), **Glasnik IVZ**, VII, № 3, p. 79; Kreševljaković H., **Esnafi I** (Esnafs I), p. 151.

(ii) There is no historical evidence for the above story. It should be remembered that at the time of the final conquest of Bosnia, in May 1463, not a single important battle was recorded, giving rise to the saying, »Bosnia fell without a whimper.«

#### 12. The Šehid (Islamic Martyrs') Graves at Bulog and under Gorica

When the Turks bombarded the Hodidjed fortress from Bulog, the Bosnians put up a desperate resistance and many heroes fell beneath the walls. They are buried under the

great gravestones which stand today at Bulog and are still known as Šehitluci (the Šehid graves).

There is also a cemetery in Sarajevo in which **šehids** are buried — soldiers who were killed when the city was taken. It is said that during the battle two soldiers, Čorbadži Hasan Aga and Jemendži Mustafaga, prepared food and carried it to the army on Gorica.

(i) Traljić S., **Iz narodne tradicije sarajevskih muslimana (Popular Traditions of the Sarajevo Moslems)**, *Islamski svijet*, IV, 1935, № 133, p. 6.

(ii) Historical sources do not record any battle during the final conquest of Hodidjed. In 1459, when Hodidjen had already long been in Turkish hands, the Bosnian king, Stjepan Tomaž, attempted to retake it, but without success.

### 13. Khan Kiraj

While the battle for Hodidjed was still in progress, a certain Khan Kiraj, together with his troops, detached himself from the rest of the army. He was born in the Crimea, and it is said that he was the son of a Tatar khan. He marched down the river Miljacka, stormed and took a tower which stood on the summit of some lofty cliffs, but was killed in the town near where the Ali Pasha mosque stands today. His grave is still to be seen there.

(i) Truhelka Č., op. cit., pp. 263-264; Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije (Sarajevo Mosques)**, GZM, XXIII, 1911, p. 175.

(ii) It is not possible to establish whether the Khan Kiraj of popular legend was a histo-



rical personage, since evidence is lacking. The headstone of his supposed grave is carved in the shape of an unusual pointed cap, while the stone itself is decorated with reliefs of a half-moon, a fist, a battle axe, a bone and arrow, and rosettes. The footstone is also richly decorated.

#### 14. **Gaziler Turbe**

In the fierce battle that was fought under Gorica, two heroes, Ajni-dede and Šemsi-dede, were killed. Later, a **turbe** (mausoleum), known as the **Gaziler turbesi** (the heroes' mausoleum), was built for them. Older citizens of Sarajevo paid particular respect to this tomb, providing donations for the keeper of the **turbe** and the provision of lamps for the graves. It was believed that if you first hung the coin you would donate about your head, it would function as a prophylactic against headache. People would pray for the spirits of the dead **šehids** and afterwards take careful note of what would be said to them by the first passer-by that they happened to meet—the future would be predicted from the words.

(i) Kadić R., **Legenda o mističnim moćima sarajevskih turbeta (Legends of the Mystic Powers of the Sarajevo Turbes)**, **Jugoslavenski list**, XXIII, Sarajevo, 1940, No. 53, p. 9.

(ii) The Gaziler turbe was known in the Old Market as early as 1459. Until 1950 there was in the vicinity of the Ali Pasha mosque a **tekija** (dervish monastery) which was founded by a certain Hasan Beg. The gravestones of these two fallen dervishes are to be found today in the garden of the Ali Pasha mosque.

## 15. Zindžirli Ibrahim-dede

There was with the Conqueror's army a certain Hadži Ibrahim whom the Sultan had appointed commander of the western part of the army on Gorica. The Sultan said to him in Turkish, »**Culeci dayan Hacı Ibrahim!**« which means, »Hold your position, Hadži Ibrahim, and do not withdraw!« Hadži Ibrahim was killed in the battle on Gorica, where a **turbe** was raised for him, known as the »Turbe of Zindžirli Ibrahim-dede.« It was a white-washed **turbe** consisting of four slender stone pillars and a cupola roofed with lead, and with an **alem** (decorative half-moon supported by three of four globes) on the summit. The people of Sarajevo would visit this tomb, particularly during the forty days before Jurjevo (Orthodox St. George's Day), to pray to the **šehid** to grant their wishes.

It was once believed in old Sarajevo that, during the battle against the Austrian army in 1878, an enormous human figure appeared above this **turbe** (mausoleum), and floated like a cloud above Gorica. The figure was draped in a long green robe, it had a white beard, and a green turban on its head. In its right hand it held a **tespih** (prayer-beads) which it waved about, while in its left it carried a **tespih-dajak**—the short walking stick used by the dervishes. It is said that the Austrian soldiers were mown down like corn before its prayer-beads. Finally, the figure faded into the sky like a whisp of mist. Then Gorica fell into the enemy's hands, and the Austrian soldiers destroyed the **turbe** that same day. During his life Ibrahim-dede was a dervish, always belted with a dervish **zincir** (chain).



(i) Kemura S., op. cit., p. 632; Kadić R., **O sablasnoj ljudskoj sjeni (Concerning a Ghostly Human Shadow)**, *Jugoslovenski list*, XXIII, Sarajevo, 1939, No. 67, p. 4.

(ii) The **turbe** (mausoleum) stood on the summit of Gorica hill. It is not known when it was built. It was torn down on 19 August 1878. There were a number of **turbes** and cult graves in old Sarajevo which were popularly believed to be the graves of soldiers killed in battles for the city. In the middle of the 19th century, according to a survey, there were more than 70 cult sites (**turbes** and graves). Thus we know that the **turbe** of Abdulfetah-dede was located at the so-called **Šehova korija**, while that of Setri-dede was in Logavina Street. The **turbe** and **tekija** of Turna-dede were beside the Čekrkčija mosque in the Bašćaršija, while that of Džendži-dede was in today's Krajiška Street under Gorica. These and the other above-mentioned **turbes** were demolished in the first decades of the Austro-Hungarian occupation.

## 16. The Šehid Turbe at Vogošća

At upper Vogošća near Sarajevo there was an old **šehid turbe**. It was said that a **gazi** (hero) came to that place carrying in his hands his own severed head. He was buried at the place where he fell and a **turbe** was built over him.

(i) Čajkanović V., **Srpske narodne umotvorine I (Serbian Folk Literature I)**, Beograd, 1927, p. 540.

(ii) The theme of the warrior carrying his head in his hands or under his arm is charac-

teristic of the legends concerning **šehids** slain in battle, and is found in many areas of Bosnia as well as in other regions.

### 17. **Krkavica**

It was said of one of the Conqueror's soldiers that he was killed at Bistrik, at the top of **Šehove dugonje**, as Bistrik was once called. At the place where, groaning with pain, he gave up the ghost, the fountain named **Krkavica** was built.<sup>1</sup>

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Vodovodi (Waterworks)**, p. 51.

(ii) **Krkavica** was one of the fountains built by Isa Bego Ishaković. Water was brought to it and carried down to the Sultan's Mosque through pipes from the Pastrma springs above Bistrik. The fountain was in use until 1938, when it was walled up.

### 18. **The Šaban-dede Turbe**

The **šehid**, Šaban-dede, who was killed in the attack on Sarajevo by Eugene of Savoy in 1697. was buried in a wooden **turbe** (mausoleum) at the foot of Bistrik. It is said that he was buried in his own garden. Some called this **turbe** »the **Turbe** of Sheik Alija,« after the Rifia sheik of the same name who was buried in the same **turbe** together with his wife. This **turbe** was visited by those who wished to become rich.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »krčati« = »to groan with pain«, »to growl«. The toponym **Krkavica** is cognate with the verb.



(i) Mujezinović M., **Islamska epigrafija I (Islamic Epigraphics I)**, Sarajevo, 1974, p. 449; Kadić R., **Legenda o mističnim moćima sarajevskih turbeta (Legends of the Mystic Powers of the Sarajevo Turbes)**, p. 9.

(ii) This well-known **turbe** was situated in the general area of lower Bistrik, beside the Čokadžija mosque.

## 19. Jekovac

A certain Mustafa Nuri Efendi, who lived in the last century, was popularly included amongst the **šehids** (martyrs). When Sultan Mahmut II began to introduce reforms in the Turkish empire, the people of Bosnia revolted against the Sultan's innovations. The people of Sarajevo were in the forefront of the revolt, since there was a janissary contingent quartered in the city. In order to spread the revolt to the other towns of Bosnia, the janissaries composed a letter which they intended to send to Zvornik, a town which was in favor of the reforms. They invited distinguished citizens to confirm their agreement with the letter by affixing their seals to it. But Nuri Efendi did not wish to do so, and beat his seal to pieces with pestle and mortar so that no one could use his **muhur** (seal). He then fled and locked himself in the Sarajevo fortress. He told the people to do the right thing, for which reason he was disliked. A mob went in pursuit of him, and arrived at the Mejdan on Vratnik. There they wanted to stone him to death, but some other people came who said to the crowd, »Take him outside, out of the city, and there do what you like with him! If you kill him here, inside these walls, the whole of

Vratnik will suffer the Sultan's revenge.« So the people took Nuri Efendi outside the walls of the city and at the Yellow Bastion they stoned him until the stones covered his body. The victim howled so loudly that, it was said, the whole **čaršija** could hear him.<sup>1</sup> Since then that place has been called Jekovac.<sup>2</sup>

(i) Traljić S., **Narodna tradicija o sarajevskom gradu** (Popular Traditions about Sarajevo), **Islamski svijet**, III, Sarajevo, 1934, No. 79, p. 18.

(ii) The **ešraf reis** (leading aristocrat), Mustafa Nurudin Efendi Šerifović, was an immigrant from the Crimea. His son was the famous Fazli Pasha who played a significant role in the events following the above-mentioned revolt of 1828—1831. The events which this popular story records took place on 6th January 1827. A memorial tablet with a chronogram in verse written in Turkish, together with a folk poem, bears witness to them.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »čaršija« = »the commercial quarter of a town.«

<sup>2</sup> Translators' note: »ječati« = »to howl.« The toponym Jekovac is cognate with the verb.



#### IV. OLD BUILDINGS AND STORIES OF THE FOUNDERS

##### 20. **Kozja ćuprija**

To the east of the old Sarajevo fortress there is, over the river Miljacka, an old bridge which is popularly called Kozja ćuprija. The story goes that the bridge was built by two brothers, Sinan and Mehmed, who were goatherds.<sup>1</sup> While minding their flocks in nearby Jarčedol, which overlooks the place where the bridge stands today, they one day found hidden treasure in a cave. When they had shared the treasure equally, Mehmed built a bridge over the Miljacka, while his brother, Sinan, erected a mosque at Bistrik which is popularly known as the Kečedžija mosque, from the Turkish word **kec** meaning **goat, goatherd**.

(i) Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije (Sarajevo Mosques)**, GZM, XXII, p. 227; Hadžijahić M., **Kozja ćuprija u prošlosti (The History of the Goat's Bridge)**, Novi Behar, IX, Sarajevo, 1935, No. 1-3, pp. 17-18.

(ii) There are no historical data concerning the origins of this bridge. Recent hypotheses assume quite convincingly that the bri-

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »kozja ćuprija« = »goat's bridge.«

dge was built in the second half of the 16th century, when the central Turkish government, under the Vizier Mehmed Pasha Sokolović, developed a network of main roads in this part of the empire. More reliable historical data about the bridge belong mainly to the 18th and 19th centuries.

## 21. Šejtanija

Šejtanija was a bridge which stood on the site of today's Čobanija bridge, in the vicinity of the theater, and was built, as the old story goes, by the famous Sarajevo poet Hasan Kaimija. Kaimija was a dervish who converted his house into a dervish **tekija**, where the Kader Dervishes would congregate. He financed the building of a wooden bridge. Since he was a dervish elder, a **šejh** (sheik), his bridge became popularly known as Šejhanija. In the course of time people corrupted this name into Šejtanija bridge.<sup>1</sup>

(i) Djordjević T. R., **Naš narodni život (Yugoslav Folk Life)**, Beograd, 1932, p. 13; Čelić Dž. and Mujezinović M., **Stari mostovi u BiH (Old Bridges in Bosnia and Herzegovina)**, Sarajevo, p. 108.

(ii) This wooden bridge is attributed to the aristocrat Čoban Hasan, while its restorer is said to have been the sheik Hasan Kaimija. The bridge stood until 1888, when it was replaced with today's iron structure.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »šejtan« = »shaitan.«



## 22. The Šeherćehaja Bridge beneath Ali-fakovac

This bridge was, according to popular legend, built on the order of the Sarajevo **Šeherćehaja** (mayor), but neither his name, nor the date of the construction of the bridge are known. Thus the name of the bridge constitutes only a pale reflection of this unnamed Sarajevo functionary.

(ii) According to historical sources, this bridge was built around 1540 by Hadži Mehmed Vlakovac. He was born at the village of Vlakovo near Visoko, and was the founder of a **mahala** and a mosque in Sarajevo. It follows that the Šeherćehaja bridge was named after the mayor Hadži Mehmed, and was built on the site of an earlier bridge which Isa Beg Ishaković erected in 1462.

## 23. The Ćumurija Bridge

According to popular tradition, this bridge was built in the vicinity of the Sabljarska **čaršija**. This was the place where the swordsmiths had their workshops. These consumed a great deal of **ćumur** (charcoal), and they would throw the used charcoal into the river. Another version has it that this was the place where grocers and merchants emptied their **mangalas**, portable stoves containing hot ash with which they warmed their shops during the winter. The Ćumurija bridge took its name from the charcoal dust. This is most likely true, although many other versions exist.

(i) Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije (Sarajevo Mosques)**, GZM, XXII, p. 261; **Iz starog Sarajeva, postanak Careve, Latinske i Ćumuri-**

je ćuprije (The Origins of the Sultan's Bridge, the Latin Bridge, and the Ćumurija Bridge), *Večernja pošta*, IX, Sarajevo, 1930, No. 2608, p. 10.

(ii) The first bridge on the site of today's Ćumurija bridge was built by a certain Hadži Hasan in the vicinity of the Sabljarska čaršija before 1565. It was repaired several times, and in 1886 the wooden bridge was replaced by today's iron structure.

## 24. The Mošćanica

A branch of this stream once ran down the Vratnik hill and entered the Miljacka at the Sultan's bridge. The stream entered the town walls at today's Višegrad Gate and descended the hill watering gardens and turning mill wheels.

It was said that long ago, a few decades after the conquest of Bosnia, this branch of the Mošćanica was brought to Vratnik by Skender Pasha. A certain woman steadfastly refused to allow the water to flow through her garden, but Skender Pasha tricked her by persuading her to let the water run through her property only by day and by night. The following day the woman demanded that the water be diverted. But Skender Pasha answered that she herself had agreed that the water could flow by day and by night, not merely for 24 hours. When the woman saw that she had been tricked, she resigned herself to the situation, for no one in this world can have everything they want.

(i) Kreševljaković H., *Vodovodi (Waterworks)*, p. 67.



(ii) The Skender Pasha of this folk tale was three times Sanjak Beg of the Bosnian Sanjak (1478-1505), so that the construction of a channel for the Mošćanica to the hill of Vratnik—a channel which no longer exist—took place most likely in the third phase of his governorship (1499—1505).

## 25. The Sweet Fountains

The Sweet Fountains were built into the wall of the courtyard of the Kemaludin mosque. According to the legend, they acquired this name from the fact that a certain citizen of Sarajevo made a wager with a stranger that amongst the peculiarities of Sarajevo there existed a spring, the water of which was as sweet as though it had been sugared. He would show him this spring next day at sunrise. The stranger agreed to this. During the night the man from Sarajevo brought a bowl of honey and an oke of sugar and poured them into the **musluk**, the small tank inside the fountain. When in the morning he brought the stranger to drink that water, the latter tasted it, and found that the water was indeed sweet. In this way this fountain became known as the Sweet Fountains.

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Vodovodi (Water-works)**, p. 99.

(ii) Two drinking pipes were built into this fountain, making it the so-called **čifte-česma**. It ran until 1891. On the site of the one-time Kemaludin mosque, its yard and cemetery and the Sweet Fountains, the skyscraper in today's Vase Miskina Street was built in 1940.

## 26. The Maiden's Fountain

While Gazi Husref Beg was finishing the construction of his own mosque, Čekrkčki-baba Muslihudin, builder and benefactor, was building his mosque beneath Kovači. Since the building of both mosques was near completion, the two of them met to agree on which day the ceremonial openings would take place. They decided to go together in search of a spring which could supply water for the **abdesthanas**.<sup>1</sup>

So they went together up Kovači, and ascended Ploča and then Strošići, where they met a beautiful girl who said to them, »If you will also build me a fountain in front of my house, so that I no longer have to carry water from a distance, I will tell you where there is a good strong spring.« They promised her accordingly, and the girl directed them to Zmajevac, to the Crnil spring. They brought the water in pipes all the way from this place to their mosques, and in Strošići they built a fountain which is popularly known as the Maiden's Fountain.

Another story has it that this fountain was built by two poor girls who made their living from weaving **bez**, a thin cotton cloth. They saved enough money to build a fountain in their **mahala** (quarter) in Strošići. We leave it to the reader to decide which story is true. But it is well-known that there cannot be two truths, just as two acrobats cannot dance on the same tightrope!

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: the place in the immediate vicinity of a mosque where the ritual washing (**abdest**) is performed before prayer.



(i) Kreševljaković H., **Vodovodi (Water-works)**, p. 81.

(ii) The waterpipe which brought water from Crnil to this fountain, as well as to many other public fountains in this part of the city, was donated by Gazi Husref Beg and built before 1531. For the most part the water travelled beneath the ground, through earthenware pipes. Until 1878 these pipes supplied water to 21 public fountains in various **mahalas**. The Maiden's Fountain was in use until 1895, when Crnil source was included in the city's water system.

## 27. The Prijeka Fountain

This fountain on Vratnik was, by popular report, also donated by Gazi Husref Beg. This is all that we know today about it. It took its name from its unusual **poprijek** (diagonal) position.

(i) Kreševljaković H., op. cit., p. 85.

(ii) We possess no historical information concerning this fountain.

## 28. Mihrivoda

This is the name of a fountain and waterpipe which supplied the northern part of old Sarajevo. It is said that the water from this spring was brought through the pipes by a girl named Mihrija. An **evli**, a holy man, appeared to her in a dream and told her where the spring was situated, instructing her to dig it up and make the fountain and pipes. The next morning she began the work and completed the task she had been told to perform.

(i) Kreševljaković H., op. cit., p. 133

(ii) According to old Sarajevo people, Mihrivoda dates back a long way, and it took its water from an erratic source popularly called **bježivoda**<sup>1</sup> until 1937 when the source dried up. The entire northern part of the old city was known as Mihrivoda.

## 29. Hrvatin

It is said that in the Magudi **mahala** there once lived a **terzija** (tailor). One night a man in a green robe appeared to him in a dream, saying, »Listen, tailor, dig up there above your house and you will find water. Make a well and both you and others will have use of it!« When the tailor awoke he began to think about what to do. He spent the whole day thinking, but did nothing. The second night he dreamed the same dream, and again the third night, when this ghost in a green robe said, »If you don't start digging tomorrow, you'll meet your doom!« Next day early the tailor found a well-digger, took him to the place indicated, and said to him, »Here I want you to dig me a well.« To this the well-digger replied, »It will be difficult to dig here, but if I do dig I will need a lot of money!« Then the tailor took him by the hand and led him to his shop, where he said, »Everything that you see here is mine. I won't mind if I have to sell everything down to the last needle, and the last pair of scissors, just so long as that well is dug. If need be I will survive without

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: inconstant water.



all these!» So then the well-digger began to work and the well at Hrvatin was soon completed.

(i) Kreševljaković H., op. cit., pp. 55-56.

(ii) Hrvatin was the strongest spring in old Sarajevo. Since the spring (located in the area known as Megara) was beneath ground level, in a deep hole similar to a well, it was built up to ground level by a number of stone layers, each with a hole in the middle rather like the opening in a millwheel, so that the water emerged in a narrow spate and under greater pressure. The improvement of the Hrvatin spring was financed in 1770 by Hadži Omer Žetica, a Sarajevo **abadžija**<sup>1</sup> and merchant, and a well-known benefactor of old Sarajevo (d. 1783).

### 30. Feredžuša

It was said that, at the top of Logavina Street, in the **mahala** surrounding the Buzadžija mosque, there lived long ago a certain man together with his wife. From time to time his wife reproached him for their poverty, saying that she did not even have a **feredža**, a cape worn on the street. Time went by, during which the man secretly hoarded money, coin by coin, in order to be able eventually to buy a **feredža** for his wife. And one day, when he had saved enough money for a good cape, he called his wife and said, »Here is the money, go and buy yourself a cape!« But his wife answered, »You know, there isn't a single fountain in our **mahala** and we have to bring wa-

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: a tailor in a local type of cloth.

ter from a distance, even from other **mahalas**. Why don't you build us a fountain beside our house, and we'll buy the cape when we can.« The man heeded the words of his wife, and on the corner of Logavina Street, beside the mosque, he built a beautiful fountain which the people consequently called **Feredžuša**.<sup>1</sup>

(i) Kreševljaković H., op. cit., pp. 94-95; Hadžijahić M., **Sarajevske džamije u narodnoj predaji (Sarajevo Mosques in Popular Tradition)**, Zbornik za život i običaje Južnih Slavena, XXX/2, Zagreb, 1936, p. 230. (Hereafter **Sarajevo Mosques I.**)

(ii) Feredžuša was situated in the underpinning wall of the Buzadžija mosque, and was one of the more beautiful of the city's fountains. It was walled up in 1933 when the mosque was renovated, together with the inscription which commemorated the renovation of 1773. It was probably built in 1624/1625.

### 31. The Fountain in Nova Mahala

This fountain was situated beside the Buzadži Hadži Jahja mosque. According to popular tradition, a fountain was built by a certain Hadži Jahja at the same time as the mosque. The water came from three different springs under Sedrenik hill, and the fountain was well-known for this reason.

(i) Kreševljaković H., op. cit., pp. 131-132.

(ii) All that is known of the founder of this fountain, Buzadži Hadži Jahja, is that before the year 1602 he built a mosque in the

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: **Feredžuša** refers to **feredža**, i. e. cape.



so-called **Nova** (new) **mahala**. The fountain was well built and it was unusual in having three drinking pipes. It was renovated several times, and in 1928 it was incorporated into the city's water system.

### 32. Jusuf Pasha's Well

It used to be said that there lived in Sarajevo a certain Jusuf Pasha, surnamed Čuprić, who had fled to Sarajevo, and who played the fool. He settled himself in a room in the Zildžiluk **čaršija**, and beside it dug a well. When he died, a **medresa**<sup>1</sup> was built on the site, while the well, untill it was filled in, was known as Jusuf Pasha's well. The water from that well was used for curing fever. Jusuf Pasha's grave is still to be found at Alifakovac, but that is another story.

(i) Kreševljaković H., op. cit., p. 162.

(ii) The well was beside the so-called Wooden **Medresa** which was situated in the area of today's Obala pariške komune, on the left bank of the river Miljacka. It had a **santrač**, a rectangular parallelepiped framework made from a single stone, and was hollowed out.

### 33. Isa Beg and His Pious Endowments

Isa Beg is remembered for the fact that he founded Sarajevo and that, according to the traditional story, he ordered that the construction of various buildings in the town be paid for from revenues of his **vakuf** (property). It is said that he first built a palace, the Se-ray, for himself, and then a mosque, that

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: an Islamic religious school.

which today is known as the Sultan's Mosque, and next to it a **hamam** (hammam) at the foot of Bistrik which the people called Isa Beg's Bath.

It was said that two brothers were buried under the **mihrab** (niche) deep in the interior wall of the mosque, and under the **papučluk**, where shoes were taken off. Some two hundred years before the conquest of Bosnia, one of the brothers had lived in the **maštrik** (east), and the other in the **magrib** (Magreb—west) of the Turkish empire, but that one day, after a long period of time, they once again met in a wood on the exact site of today's Sultan's Mosque. The older brother then said to the younger, »Brother, give orders that when you die they bury you in the place where a mosque's **mihrab** will, be, and I will order that they bury me a little lower down, so that above me there will be the **papučluk**.« And so it came to pass. When Isa Beg built the Sultan's Mosque, the wishes of the pair were fulfilled. It is said that until recently there was a sign carved in stone which recalled the grave of the younger brother.

The following story is also told of the Sultan's Mosque. In his **vakufnama**, his endowment document, Isa Beg gave to the mosque a precious stone for use in extreme need. This jewel of great price was stolen by one of the cleaners, but was found and concealed in the wall beside the **mihrab** (niche). Still today, it is said, two marks can be seen in the wall where the precious jewel was hidden.

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Esnafi I (Esnafs I)**, p. 56; Hadžijahić M., **Sarajevske džamije I (Sarajevo Mosques I)** p. 234.



(ii) Isa Beg Ishaković, the second son of Ishak Beg, was governor of the Branković lands, and later Sanjak Beg of the Bosnian Sanjak (1464-1468). In the spring of 1448 he stormed into Bosnia and, after laying it waste, permanently occupied the Vrhbosna district together with the castle of Hodidjed. In 1463 he played a decisive role in the destruction of the Bosnian kingdom. He laied the foundations of today's Sarajevo, which took its name from his palace. In the summer of 1464 he was appointed Sanjak Beg of the Bosnian Sanjak for the second time. His name is mentioned for the last time in 1472. The present structure of the Sultan's Mosque was built only in the 16th century, on the site of an older mosque which must certainly have been built before 1462, and which its founder Isa Beg later presented to the Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror, whence its name. It has been renovated several times, the last occasion being in 1847/1848.

### 34. The Magreb Mosque

In the western part of the old city of Sarajevo there is a mosque which is popularly attributed to a certain sheik of the Magreb. When Isa Beg came to Sarajevo he was accompanied by a dervish sheik from the western lands, from the Magreb, who built a mosque on this spot.

It is said that when Eugene burned Sarajevo, his soldiers captured a woman in the Vinograd **mahala** (quarter) and took her as far as Buda, where they put her into service. The woman was a good servant and pleased her masters, but they never allowed her to enter a

certain building in their courtyard. Once, when none of her master was present, she found the keys and opened the forbidden door. She found herself looking at a **kubura**, a wooden casket, above a **mezar** (grave). She fell onto the casket and fainted. Then an old man appeared with an **ahmedija** (a thin cloth) wrapped around his cap, and asked her who she was and where she was from. The woman explained to him everything that had happened to her, and that she was a native of Sarajevo. The old man asked her if she knew where in Sarajevo the Magreb mosque was situated. She said that she knew, and then he asked, »And would you like to be there now?« The woman nodded. The old man said to her, »Stand on my foot for a moment and close your eyes!« She did as she was told and when she opened her eyes again—she was indeed in Sarajevo, right outside the Magreb mosque! It is said that from this time onwards the woman went every Friday without fail to this mosque. She frequented it in order that her wishes might be fulfilled, and she prayed for the soul of the sheik of the Magreb.

(i) Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije I (Sarajevo Mosques I)**, GZM, XII, p. 630; Hadžija-  
hić M., **Sarajevske džamije u narodnoj predaji (Sarajevo Mosques in Popular Tradition)**, **Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena**, XXXII, Zagreb, 1939, p. 222. (Hereafter **Sarajevo Mosques II**.)

(ii) It is still an open question when the mosque of the sheik of the Magreb was actually built, but there is no indication that the popular version of its founding has any basis in historical fact.



### 35. Nateguša

The Nateguša, or the Nategnuta,<sup>1</sup> mosque was popularly so called because of the story that a beam used in its construction was too short, so that the carpenters and the mosque's founder endeavoured to make it longer. With God's aid the beam was stretched to the length needed and built into the mosque, whence the name Nateguša.

(i) Hadžijahić M., **Sarajevske džamije I (Sarajevo Mosques I)**, p. 233.

(ii) The Nateguša, or more correctly the Mesdžid of Nimar-zade Davud-čelebija (Neimarević),<sup>2</sup> was built in 1528 in the **mahala** of the same name.

### 36. The White Mosque

Of the White mosque on Vratnik it was said that it was built by the »White Pasha« who also built the White Bastion of the Sarajevo fortress. But this is not true. The White mosque was built by the **divan katib** (court scribe) Hajdar Efendi. The story goes that, since he was a scribe, he spent his whole life making pens from reeds, and that he collected so many of them that he was able to order: »When I die, let the water in which you will wash my dead body be heated on a fire made of these pieces of reed which I have spent my whole life collecting!« It is said that his wish was respected. The mosque became known as »the White« because it was so beautifully whitewashed that there was not a whiter mosque in the whole of old Sarajevo.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »stretched.«

<sup>2</sup> Translators' note: a small mosque.

(i) Hadžijahić M., op. cit., p. 232; Traljić S., **Sarajevski grad Vratnik (The Sarajevo Fortress of Vratnik)**, p. 36.

(ii) The White mosque was the endowment of Husref Beg's secretary (his **divan katib**), Hajdar Efendi, son of Abdulah. His father was a local convert to Islam. Hajdar Efendi died in Sarajevo upon his return from the **hadžiluk**<sup>1</sup> to Mecca which he made in 1545. The mosque was built between 1536 and 1545.

### 37. The Čekrkčija Mosque

The founder of the Čekrkčija mosque, at the foot of Kovači Street, was, it is said, an artisan who made **čekrks** (winches). He was poor and had only one cow, so that he was barely able to feed himself. One night he dreamed of his father who told him to slaughter his cow in the morning, skin it, and go to Dubrovnik where, he said, he could sell the skin for a good price. His father told him to ask a ducat for every hair! When the winch-maker woke up, his cow had died on him. He skinned it and left for Dubrovnik to sell the hide. A merchant asked, »How much is this hide?« and the winch-maker answered, »A ducat for every hair!« The Dubrovnik merchant was shocked and said, »If I had the treasure of the Čekrk-baba of Sarajevo, which he buried under a mulberry tree in his garden, even then I would not be able to pay for the hide!« When the winch-maker heard this, he returned to Sarajevo and, in his garden, dug up the treasure from beneath the mulberry tree. With

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: the pilgrimage.



the money he built the mosque. Wealth is the wise man's servant, but the fool's master.

Another story has it that **čekrkčija** (the winch-maker) did not have enough money to finish building the mosque, and that the work was continued by a tailor. But neither was the tailor fated to complete the work, for he too ran out of money. It was said that he even sold his tailor's scissors. Finally the mosque was finished by a third benefactor who established a number of shops for its upkeep. These shops still stand today around the walls of the mosque.

It is said that during the construction the builders quarreled about how to make the mosque face east—for the **mihrab** (niche) of the mosque must be built on the side nearest Mecca. The winch-maker indicated the direction with his hand and, they say, at that very moment the **Bejtulah** (the Kaa'ba) appeared before the builders' eyes.

It was also said that the winch-maker himself never prayed in the mosque which he had built, but sat in his shop when the people of the **čaršija** went to prayer. On one occasion a merchant asked him, »Why, Čekrkči-baba, do you not go to the prayer when you have built such a beautiful mosque?« Čekrkči-baba replied, »Come to my shop in a day or two, again at the time of prayer!« And one day that man visited the winch-maker in his shop, and the winch-maker told him to stand on his toes, to shut his eyes, and not to open them until he told him to. The merchant did as he was told, and after awhile the winch-maker told him to open his eyes. When he did so, he found that the two of them were standing in

line for the prayer at the Kaa'ba, in Mecca. They prayed there together with everyone else. When the prayer was over, he again stood on the winch-maker's foot, shut his eyes, and when he opened them, saw that he was back in the winch-maker's shop, just at the moment when people were returning from the prayer in **čekrkčija's** mosque. Then the winch-maker said to the merchant, »Never tell anyone about what you now know, and don't entertain doubts about men you are ignorant of.«

(i) Hadžijahić M., op. cit., pp. 229-230; also, **Sarajevske džamije II (Sarajevo Mosques II)**, p. 220.

(ii) The Čekrkčija mosque is today the oldest domed mosque in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was built by Muslihudin Hadži Mustafa Čekrkčija, the son of Ishak, who was probably born at Visoko in 1526. Although it is situated in the center of the city, in the Baščaršija, it escaped the catastrophic burning of Sarajevo in 1697 when Eugene of Savoy attacked the city.

### 38. Čobanija

There is an old story that one day a certain **čoban**<sup>1</sup> was sitting minding his sheep and de-lousing himself, and that each time he caught a louse he squashed it on a stone. He was lost in thought, sitting there. When he had killed 41 lice, the stone on which he was sitting fell apart and revealed a treasure of ducats. There was in the treasure a secret ma-

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: shepherd; thus »the Shepherd's mosque.«



gic sign, a **tilsum**, indicating that the treasure could not be found until the blood of 41 living creatures had been shed. The shepherd gathered up the ducats and decided to build a mosque in that place. And so the Čobanija mosque was built with that treasure, and the shepherd later became the famous noble, Čoban Hasan.

(i) Hadžijahić M., **Sarajevske džamije I (Sarajevo Mosques I)**, pp. 230-231.

(ii) History has not established exactly when the Čoban Hasan mosque was built. It was thoroughly renovated in 1874/1875, thus acquiring its present form.

### 39. The Kečedžija Mosque

There once lived at Bistrič a certain Sinan, a goatherd, who grazed his goats, together with his brother Mehmed, in Jarčedol. One day, wandering with their goats, they came upon a cave and there found a hidden treasure which they shared equally between them. From the money Mehmed, it is said, built the Goat's bridge, while Sinan went first to Mecca and, when he returned to Sarajevo, built the mosque which is popularly known as Kečedžija's, that is the Goatherd's mosque.

(i) Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije (Sarajevo Mosques)**, GZM, XXII, 1910, p. 227.

(ii) The Kekeki Sinan mosque was built before 1515. Apart from the popular legend, no details exist concerning the personality of the founder, but it is known that he was a **hodža**.<sup>1</sup> The mosque was renovated and repaired in 1763.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: Moslem priest.

## 40. The Čebedžija Mosque

In the Čebedžija **mahala** on Vratnik, there is a mosque whose origin is popularly explained as follows. A certain girl who lived in the Čebedžija **mahala** dreamed that a »good being« appeared to her and ordered her to sell her trousseau, which she had prepared for her marriage, and to build a mosque. The girl did so—she sold her trousseau and built the mosque. It is said that her grave is to be found at the mosque still.

(i) Hadžijahić M., op. cit., p. 232.

(ii) The Čebedžija mosque is officially known as the **mesdžid** of Mokri-zade Hadži Sinan (Mokrić), who could be identical with **nalbant**<sup>1</sup> Hadži Sinan, the builder in 1540 of a **mesdžid** (small mosque) on Vratnik.

## 41. The Buzadžija Mosque

A certain **buzadžija** once lived in Sarajevo who, every morning, sold fresh **boza** in front of Husref Beg's bath (hammam).<sup>2</sup> One night he woke suddenly from sleep and, as the moon was shining, thought that it was dawn and went as usual to his place in front of the hammam. There he saw some girls dancing a **kolo**.<sup>3</sup> He began to sell his **boza** to them, and put the money in his pockets or in his empty pots. Suddenly the cock crowed and the girls vanished into thin air. The **buzadžija** felt his pockets and instead of money, he found dry

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: blacksmith.

<sup>2</sup> Translators' note: »buza« or »boza« = Oriental soft drink; »buzadžija« = maker or seller of same.

<sup>3</sup> Translators' note: a Balkan round dance



pieces of garlic, bits of charcoal, and pumpkin husks. The girls had been fairies who, in those distant days, used to gather around the hammam. And so the **buzadžija**, troubled and unhappy—with neither **boza** nor money—went home, throwing away as he went the contents of his pockets. At home he woke his wife and told her the whole story. She jumped up, removed the lids from the pots and found them full of golden ducats.

The **buzadžija** rejoiced at this and vowed that he would build a mosque; to his wife he promised a new **feredža** (cape). He brought the builders and erected the mosque, and then called his wife to see it. His wife liked the mosque, but she criticized her husband because he had not also made a fountain. He told her that he had run out of money, but his wife sold her **feredža** and built the fountain called **Feredžuša**.

It is said that when the **buzadžija** found the ducats and became rich, he first decided to make pilgrimage to Mecca. The story goes that he took with him two rolls of red and green braided cord in order to measure the breadth and height of the **Bejtulah** (the Kaa'ba). It is said that he built his mosque to those same measurements, and that the mosque was accordingly known as the Kaa'ba mosque.

(i) Hadžijahić M., **Sarajevske džamije I** (**Sarajevo Mosques I**), p. 230; also, **Sarajevske džamije II** (**Sarajevo Mosques II**), pp, 221-222.

(ii) Buzadži Hadži Hasan, a Sarajevo merchant, built this mosque in 1555/1556. Chronologically it was the fifth domed mosque in Sarajevo.

## 42. The Peltek Husamudin Mosque

In the Sarajevo **mahala** of sheik Ferah there lived one Peltek Husamudin whose house was in Džino Sokak<sup>1</sup> above Kovači. One morning he rose from bed just as the muezzin in the minaret of a mosque was calling the faithful to prayer. Husamudin hurried to wash and prepare himself, but before he could finish the people in the mosque finished saying their prayers. He was sorry to be so late, so the same day he found himself some builders and began to erect a mosque in his own garden. This is how the mosque came to be called after him.

(i) Hadžijahić M., op. cit., I, p. 230; op. cit., II, pp. 221-222.

(ii) The mosque of Peltek Husamudin, popularly known as Džino mosque, is first mentioned in 1556. Not much is known about its founder, but the popular name derives from that of the Džino family which lived in the vicinity.

## 43. The Ojandži Mosque

In the old times, when there was neither cannons nor mortars, each part of Sarajevo had a man whose duty it was, during the fasting month of Ramadan, to wake the people so that they would not miss the dawn or their appointed mealtime. These men were paid for their services.

On the Green Mejdan which once existed in Terezija Street, a certain Hadži Ibrahim

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »sokak« = narrow Oriental street.



built a mosque which has long since been demolished. It is said that he was the son of a **mahala ojandžija**, the man who woke the citizens during Ramadan, so that the mosque became known as the Ojandžija mosque.

(i) Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije (Sarajevo Mosques)**, GZM, XXII, p. 277.

(ii) The official name of this mosque was the **mesdžid** of Ojandži-zade Hadži Ibrahim and was located in today's Dobrovoljačka Street. It is not known exactly when it was built, but this was certainly after 1565. The original structure was burned down in 1697 and a new mosque was built on the site.

#### 44. The Hitri Sulejman Mosque

In the quarter of Sarajevo known as Paje, above Hrid, there is an old mosque which, according to the story, was built by a certain Hitri Sulejman Efendi. The local people frequently mentioned him in their prayers.

In one version, Sulejman Efendi took part in the battle on Gorica when Bosnia was conquered. There, it is said, one of the enemy decapitated him. It was believed that Sulejman took his head under his arm and went to Paje where he dropped dead. They buried him at the place where he fell and raised a mosque above his grave.

The following story was also told about his death. One day Hitri Sulejman went to the **čaršija** and, passing by a mosque he had built earlier, noticed the gravediggers at work. He stopped and asked them, »Who has died? Is it someone from our **mahala**?« When they told him who had died, he said, »But I have

reserved the place you are digging for my own grave. Does this mean that I won't be laid to rest here?» At the moment he spoke he fell to the ground and died. The gravediggers buried him in the grave he had chosen for himself, and then dug a new grave for the other dead person. Later two gravestones (**nišani**) were placed above his grave. A small apple-sized indentation was carved in the headstone. Women used to visit the grave of Hitri Sulejman and pour water into that indentation which, after a night had passed, they would take and drink in order to have easier childbirth. The water was also said to be a curative for various illnesses.

(i) Traljić S., **Iz narodne tradicije sarajevskih muslimana (Popular Traditions of the Sarajevo Moslems)**, **Islamski svijet**, IV, Sarajevo, 1935, No. 133, p. 6; Hadžijahić M., **Sarajevske džamije II (Sarajevo Mosques II)**, p. 223.

(ii) The Hitri Sulejman mosque was built in 1578, while today's wooden minaret was raised in 1857 to replace a stone one which collapsed in 1796. The grave of Hitri Sulejman is to be found in the cemetery beside the mosque. It is marked by two octagonal **nišans** which lack either turbans or inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> Popularly these are supposed to be Hitri Sulejman's.

#### 45. **Pribjegija**

A minaret is always built next to the mosque it belongs to, but in the Sarajevo Kadija

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: the tops of many Turkish gravestones are carved in the shapes of various traditional Oriental headgear.



**mahala** (quarter) there was a strange mosque whose minaret stood alone at some distance from the mosque building. People steadfastly believed that this minaret had once stood in the customary way, against the mosque, but that one night it had removed itself to stand alone. When the minaret was demolished and a new one built against the mosque, the same thing happened—during the night the minaret detached itself from the mosque and chose loneliness. The people reconciled themselves to the situation, and the mosque acquired the name of **pribjegija** or **pribjegnuta** mosque.<sup>1</sup>

(i) Hadžijahić M., op. cit., p. 233.

(ii) The Pribjegija or, officially, the mosque of Kadi Bali Efendi, in the **mahala** of Pirin Brijeg, was probably built between 1578 and 1582 when its founder, a native of Sarajevo, was a **mula**.<sup>2</sup> Bali Efendi was one of the most distinguished citizens of that time and was tutor to the later Grand Vizier, the Bosnian Mehmed Pasha Sokolović.

#### 46. Husref Beg and His Endowments

Even today the people of Sarajevo know many stories about Gazi Husref Beg, a true benefactor to the city, as well as one of its builders. It was well-known that he left his entire wealth towards the building and maintenance of his endowments in the old city.

It was said that once Husref Beg went to court in order to have the judge verify the fact

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »pribjeći«/»prebjeći« = »to take refuge«/»to run away.«

<sup>2</sup> Translators' note: a learned man or Islamic theologian; sometimes also a judge.

that he was leaving all his property to charity. It was said that he gave everything, even the clothes he was wearing, so that he remained dressed only in his shirt. The court, however, presented him with clothes and with a house in which he could live for the rest of his life. On that occasion he also gave away a valuable **tespih** (prayer-beads) which if need be could fetch as much money as his entire property.

The story goes that once a man dreamed that Husref Beg was in paradise enjoying all the pleasures of that blessed place. Husref Beg told him that he was not there because of his endowments on earth, but because he had bought for a certain apprentice a simple **bardak** (drinking pot). The apprentice had accidentally broken a pot and, without it, was afraid to return to his cruel and evil master. The story of this dream was often repeated in old Sarajevo.

Husref Beg lived in Čurčić **mahala**, and it is said that until recently the foundations of his mansion could be seen in a garden. And whenever people would talk about the good and profitable business it was possible to do in Sarajevo, they would say that it was because Husref Beg had given the city his blessing. Whoever came to Sarajevo in poor sandals, left it in fine leather boots. This was firmly believed.

Concerning the death of Husref Beg, it was said that in a certain year he led an army into Montenegro where a revolt had broken out against the Sultan, but that he was killed fighting the Kuči. His men removed his bowels and buried them in a place which was



thereafter called Drobnjaci.<sup>1</sup> The dead body they brought back to Sarajevo and laid it to rest in the **turbe** (mausoleum) beside the mosque which he had built.

#### 47. The Mosque of Gazi Husref Beg

It was said that the Turkish Sultan one day gave this order to Gazi Husref Beg, »Build two mosques in Sarajevo, one for me and one for yourself!« The faithful Husref Beg made no objection, and began to put the order into effect.

Before he began the work of construction, he summoned a **neimar** (builder) and asked him, »What should one first do when building a mosque?« The builder was surprised by this question, and answered, »Well, build it!« at which Husref Beg ordered his execution. He called a second builder and asked him the same question, and received the answer that one should first build a kitchen where the workers would be able to obtain food. Husref Beg dismissed him, summoned a third builder, and put to him the same question that he had asked the first two. The builder pondered and, after some time, answered that one should first build a lavatory so that the workers would not foul the area around the future mosque. This answer pleased Husref Beg, who entrusted the work to this builder.

When Husref Beg had completed the building of the mosques as the Sultan had ordered, he sent word to Istanbul. The Sultan had

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: though »drobnjak« means in fact **chive** the word »drobnjaci« (treated as a plural form) is derived from »drob,« i. e. **bowels**.

already heard that one of the mosques was bigger and more beautiful than the other, so he sent an order to Sarajevo: »Husref Beg, let the mosque that you have built for me be yours, and let the one that you have built for yourself be mine.« The Sultan was afraid of being tricked, but he tricked himself, for he did not know that Husref Beg had intended the larger and more beautiful mosque for him. And so the larger and more richly decorated mosque became known as Husref Beg's, while the Sultan's Mosque is the smaller and more modest one. However, it is said that the Sultan's Mosque is bigger in one respect: the staircase of its minaret comprises 118 steps, while Husref Beg's has only 115.

#### 48. The Building of Gazi Husref Beg's Mosque

More than two hundred years ago, a traveller noted the following traditional story: »Under mount Ozren there is a fountain which is known as the Ozren Fountain, while above it there is a **majdan** (stone-pit) from which Gazi Husref Beg took the marble for the building of his mosque and hammam. This story is told by an old slave, and I write it down so that it should be known.«

The story was told in old Sarajevo that milk flowed from Trebević down wooden gutters to the **čaršija**, because milk was used instead of water for cooling the quicklime. This lime was mixed with sand and white of eggs so that the mortar would be as hard as possible. It was also said that at the time of the building of Gazi Husref Beg's mosque, a huge pole, on which lights and oil lamps used to



be hung, was cut down at Kovačići, an area now dense with houses. The great granite pillars which support the porch of the Beg's mosque were hauled through Lukavica, from Sarajevsko Polje, by hundreds of yoked oxen. It was said that the the peasants fiercely competed amongst themselves to provide oxen for the dragging of the stone, because Husref Beg paid well. The ox of one man died under the yoke, and the Beg immediately paid him a **marijaš** (two coins). At this the peasant exclaimed, »If all four of my oxen had died, I would be a rich man!« So much could two coins buy then.

(i) Hadžijahić M., op. cit., I, p. 236; Nametak A., **Gazi Husrevbeg u narodnoj tradiciji (Gazi Husref Beg in Popular Tradition)**, 400 Years: The Gazi Husref Beg Memorial, Sarajevo, 1932, pp. 25-26; Kreševljaković H., **Gazi Husrevbeg (Gazi Husref Beg)**, 400 Years, p. 22; Truhelka Ć., **Iz prošlosti Sarajeva (From Sarajevo's Past)**, Nada I, Sarajevo, 1895, p. 9; **Gazi Husrefbeg, njegov život i njegovo doba (Gazi Husref Beg, hist Life and Times)**, GZM, XXIV, p. 58.

(ii) Gazi Husref Beg, the son of Ferhad Beg and Seldžuka, daughter of Sultan Bajazid II, was born in Serrez in 1480 where his father was governor. In 1521 Husref Beg was appointed governor of Bosnia, which he ruled, with three short breaks, until his death in 1541. For his military feats against Austria and Hungary he received the title of **Gazi** (hero). Husref Beg was one of the most distinguished governors of Bosnia, and is considered to be the founder of Sarajevo in which he erected a considerable number of monume-

ntal buildings, developing Sarajevo from a mere market town into a city with a rich commercial life and varied crafts. Sarajevo attained the peak of its economic and cultural development in the period from 1530 to 1570, when it acquired all of its more important public buildings.

Begova džamija<sup>1</sup> is the most impressive and important architectural monument of old Sarajevo. It was finished in the summer of 1531, but the work of building it was begun some years earlier.

#### 49. The Haseći Hatun Mosque

It was believed that the oldest mosque in Sarajevo was built by a woman merchant. Her name was Haseći Hatun, while the mosque that she founded was »behind the Bath,« i. e. north of Gazi Husref Beg's hammam.

(i) Hadžijahić M., **Sarajevske džamije II (Sarajevo Mosques II)**, p. 219.

(ii) Analysis of the available historical sources refutes the popular story of the great age of this mosque, and indicates that the Haseći Hatun mosque was built by Husref Beg's wife whose name was Šahdidar and whose origins are obscure. The mosque was built between 1540 and 1560, and was burned down in a fire in 1879.

#### 50. The Hadžis' Mosque (the Mosque of Vekil-Harč)

Beside the river Miljacka, under the Ali-fakovac hill, there is a mosque which is po-

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<sup>1</sup>Translators' note: Gazi Husref Beg's mosque or **Begova džamija**, as it is popularly known.



pularly known as the Hadžis' mosque. This name derives from the fact that Sarajevo people making the pilgrimage to Mecca would pause at this mosque to pray for a good journey and, upon their return, would give thanks here that they were safely back in their native city. Some also called it the Mosque of Vekil-Harč, after one of Husref Beg's quartermasters (**vekil-harč**).

(i) Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije (Sarajevo Mosques)**, GZM, XXII, p. 100; Mujezinović M., **Islamska epigrafika u BiH I (Islamic Epigraphics in Bosnia and Herzegovina I)**, p. 337.

(ii) Mustafa, the **vekil-harč**, built this mosque at Toplik, beside the Miljacka, probably before 1545. Historical sources confirm the popular story about the founder. It has been renovated a number of times.

### 51. The Ali Pasha Mosque

It was said that the benefactor of this mosque, Hadim (Servant) or Gazi Ali Pasha, who at that time was **valija**, that is, governor of the Bosnian province, would every day, after his work was over, help the people. He would bring water to the helpless and sick, and would help them in every way. He did all this to earn himself a better place in the next world, in which he firmly believed.

(i) Hadžijahić M., **Sarajevske džamije II (Sarajevo Mosques II)**, p. 219.

(ii) The founder of this mosque, Hadim Ali Pasha, was Bosnian Sanjak Beg from 7th May 1557 until December of the same year. In his will of October 1557 he requested that

beside his grave, by the lower reach of the Koševo stream, a mosque should be erected, and to this end he left a third of his wealth. The mosque was built in 1561, and is the most beautiful Turkish architectural monument in Sarajevo. Ali Pasha was born in the village of Drozgometve near Hadžići.



## V. WARRIORS AND HEROES

### 52. Alija Djerzelez

Many stories were told and many songs were sung in old Sarajevo about Alija Djerzelez and his heroic deeds. It was also said of him that in the town he had two houses, one beside Sinan's **tekija** (dervish monastery), and the other under the hill of Grdonj on the north side of Sarajevo in which he spent his summers. He had an old mother and an unmarried sister named Ajkuna. They were poor and, since they could not live from Alija's earnings, the two women wove and knitted and thus somehow fed themselves.

It was also said that Alija had some property in Sarajevsko Polje. The story goes that Alija's sister, unjustly slandered, begged her brother on her deathbed that the water in which her dead body would be washed be heated on a fire of elm wood, and that instead of **nišans** (gravestones) they should put above her grave two brands from that same fire. When her brother had sworn that he would do this she said to him, »Undishonored and innocent I die, and those two brands which you will place on my grave will prove it: if they bear leaf, it will be known that I have spoken the truth!« When she died they buried her and carried out her **amanet** (last wishes). And, in truth, the brands sprouted leaves and

two great elm trees grew above her grave, so that the entire area, near Alipašino Polje, became known as »Velika drveta.«<sup>1</sup>

During the time when Husref Beg was **valija** (governor) of Sarajevo, Alija Djerzelez served him for a time. The Beg employed him only for the loading of horses and for bringing wood from the forest.

Alija was, they say, completely bald, so when he had to go to the forest for wood, he would always leave early and return late when there would be no one on the streets, so that the people, and especially children, would not tease him or throw stones at him. It was also said that Alija never wanted to cut a tree, nor would he chop young branches. He had probably heard from someone that trees too were living creatures and that it was a sin to cut down a young tree, so he always kept to this rule.

One morning Alija went early to the forest, probably at Vučja Luka. Wandering about in the forest in his search for dry wood, he heard a child crying in that deserted place, and went to see what the matter was. To his great surprise he found in the grass a small newborn baby lying in the hot sun. He asked himself what such a young child could possibly be doing alone in the forest. He was sorry for the child, so for the first time in his life he cut a young leafy branch and placed it above the child's head in order to give it a little shade. He then went on his way collecting wood in the forest. But suddenly, beside the child, he saw a woman all in white—her long

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »Enormous Trees.«



hair flowing down her back, and her white face more than beautiful. The woman asked him, »Is it you who made the shade for my child?« Alija answered, »Yes, so that the sun would not burn it.« Now that woman was a fairy so she said to him, »Ask whatever you wish, I will grant it to you, since you took care of my child.« Alija Djerzelez said to her, »What I would most like is to be strong and to be a hero!« »Very well,« said the fairy, »come here and suck my nipple.« Alija approached the fairy and did so. Then fairy said to him, »Alija, you see that big stone over there? Now go, and lift it a little from the ground!« This was a very large stone, twenty men could not have moved it. Alija went to the stone and lifted it just a little from the ground. The fairy said to him again, »Come here and suck a little more!« Alija did as he was told a second time, and when the fairy ordered him again to lift the stone, Alija lifted it as though it were weightless and threw it far away from himself. Thus he acquired strength from the fairy.

Now the fairy said to him, »On the first market day you will go to the **At-mejdan** where horses are sold and find yourself a horse. You will see there a decrepit bay mare together with a bay foal. Pay any price for them and look after that foal until it becomes big enough for you to ride it. If you ever find yourself in great trouble, just call me—I will always come to help you.« In that instant the fairy and her baby vanished.

At the next market day, Alija went to the **At-mejdan** to buy himself a horse. He met a woman driving a decrepit mare which was

loaded with pears, with beneath it a bay foal. Alija bargained with the woman, bought the mare and foal, and took them to his master's stable. Day by day for a year, that foal grew as much as other foals would grow in three years. One night Alija went to the stable, and saw something extraordinary—his foal had grown wings. It would sprout them only at night when there was no one in the stable to see. In the same way Alija did not wish to show people that he had become strong. But whenever he played with children, threw stones from his shoulder or long-jumped, he would always outthrow, and jump farther than, the others.

Days went by and the summer came and with the summer the threshing time. Alija was threshing wheat together with Husref Beg's daughters in Sarajevsko Polje, when word came that somewhere in the mountains Husref Beg was fighting at the head of his army against Vuk Jajčanin who was leading 300 men of Jajce against Sarajevo. When he heard this, Alija stealthily withdrew, saddled his winged bay, and hastened to the aid of his master.

Husref Beg was fighting bravely against Vuk Jajčanin, but his forces were already exhausted and were beginning to retreat. Suddenly he saw an unknown warrior on a winged horse hurrying to his aid, scattering the enemy like chaff before him. In that scuffle Husref Beg was wounded in the arm. In a trice the unknown warrior took from his belt a scarf and bound it about Husref Beg's upper arm where a scimitar had slashed it. Husref Beg had no time ask him either who he was, nor whence he came, before the warrior had



gone on fighting, scattering the enemy and finally vanishing as though the ground had swallowed him.

Some time later Husref Beg returned home with his army. When he went to his house, his wife asked him how he had fared. Husref Beg told her that things would have ended ill and the battle been lost, if an unknown warrior on a winged horse had not appeared, scattering and cutting down before him with his scimitar the entire army of Vuk Jajčanin. »When they wounded me in my arm,« Husref Beg said, »that hero bound my wound with his scarf. There it is still, in my saddle-bags!« His wife dashed to see, and, taking the scarf from his saddle-bags and examining it carefully, said, »My God, I know whose scarf this is! I gave it to our servant Alija. And I know that these two days, when we have had the most work to do, when we have been threshing, he has not been here.« Husref Beg quickly ordered that Alija be brought before him. Alija came, the same old Alija, seemingly wretched and dejected, but Husref Beg leapt to his feet, went to him, and sat him on the cushion beside him. »Alija,« he said, »so many years you have served me and I have become indebted to you. I should pay you off, you should no longer be my servant. You are a greater hero than me!« And, truly, he paid Alija well and bade him farewell.

From this moment onwards Alija began to wander the world and fight with the greatest heroes. They say that this is where his name originated, for **Djurz-elez** means »the warrior with the mace,« or mace wielder.« It was said that, in the old times, wars were fought in

such a way that emperors chose certain warriors to represent them in duels with other emperors, so that those heroes would act as proxies for their masters. They say that countries and cities were once conquered in this way. Thus Alija Djerzelez often fought duels as the proxy of the Turkish Sultan, and always won.

Until recently there were in Sarajevo those living who could remember a hollow elm tree at Klokoti near the town of Kiseljak, which Alija Djerzelez had struck with his mace while pursuing Vuk Jajčanin. There were until recently marks in the wall at the base of the minaret of the Ulomljenica mosque which were believed to be the fingerprints of Alija Djerzelez.

Various songs were sung and stories told about the death of Alija. Some said that he was killed at Gerzovo Polje near the town of Mrkonjić, in the rebellious Krajina, by Vuk Jajčanin himself. They say that he caught Alija at prayer, crept up on him and cut him down with his sword. Although Alija realized that he would be killed he did not want to interrupt his prayer. One of the songs records that Alija was killed on mount Romanija by a **hajduk** (outlaw) named Sava of Posavlje, but this is highly unlikely. One should tell the truth, even though it is not easy to discover it.

At Gerzovo Polje there is, still today, a **turbe** (mausoleum) beneath which, it was believed, Alija Djerzelez was buried. People would visit that **turbe** even from afar, especially on **Alidžun** (Ilindan),<sup>1</sup> to commemorate this

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: St. Elia's Day, 2nd August.



great hero. Old people use to say that the mace of Alija Džerželez was preserved in Sarajevo in the »**tekija** of the Seven Brothers,« but that once, when Sarajevo was on fire, the mace was destroyed.

(i) Hörmann K. ed., **Narodne pjesme Muslimana u BiH (Moslem Folk Poems of Bosnia and Herzegovina)**, Sarajevo, 1933.

(ii) Alija Džerželez, a well-known hero of Moslem epic poetry and a notable personage of the folk tradition, was, in the view of contemporary historians, an actual person. He was a warrior and hero of the Bosnian borderland. In reports concerning the Krbavska Battle (1493) an anonymous Turkish writer from the beginning of the 16th century mentions a certain Gerz-Iljas, whom a commentator links with the epic Džerželez. In a Turkish census **defter** (administrative register) of 1485, a **timar** (feudal property) of Gerz-Eljaz is recorded for the **nahija** (small administrative area) of Dobrun near the town of Višegrad. The famous hero, Gerz-Iljas, is also mentioned in the long account written by the Turkish historian Ibn Kemal (1468-1534) of the fighting in the Bosnian borderland in the years 1479 to 1480.

In the first years after the conquest Sarajevo suffered a great misfortune—the city was captured and burned on a certain Wednesday in the month of November, 1480. In a counter-offensive by the Hungarian army, troops led by the Croatian Ban Ladislav of Egervar, Peter Doczy, and Vuk Grgurević, the Serbian despot, penetrated into Bosnia all the way to Jajce. From Jajce, Vuk reached Sarajevo and

laid it waste for three days. This event is even recalled in folk songs.

### 53. Kraljević Marko and His Brother

More than two hundred years have passed since a Sarajevo writer noted down the story of Matijaš, the brother of Kraljević Marko, who was much talked about in old Sarajevo. He wrote that, at the time of Gazi Husref Beg, there was not a single church in the city. One day Husref Beg's servant, Matijaš, asked his master to permit the building of a church even if only of wattle. Husref Beg permitted the building, and for a long time a wattle Orthodox church stood in Sarajevo.

It was said however that the servant was not Matijaš, but Andrija, the second brother of Kraljević Marko, and that it was he who had sought the permission of Husref Beg for the building of the church. Yet others said that the Christians had asked Husref Beg to allow them to build a place of worship, however small—at least large enough to stand on a buffalo's hide. Husref Beg agreed. When Kraljević Andrija got the permission, he cut the buffalo hide into thin strips so that in this way he was able, with a single buffalo hide, to surround a space large enough for the building of the Old Orthodox Church which still stands today in Sarajevo.

It was also said that Kraljević Marko himself was once in Sarajevo, when he came in search of his brother Andrija. At Bentbaša, near the Pehlivan Rock, there were two cliffs between which passed the old road to Sarajevo. On these cliffs there were two marks which were explained in the following way. When



Kraljević Marko came this way he found the gap too narrow so, they say, he put his foot against one cliff and his hand against the other, forced them apart and thus was able to pass through. These marks, one in the shape of a sandal, and the other in that of a human palm, were visible until recently. These were, so it was said, mementoes of Kraljević Marko's passage.

The story was also told that Kraljević Marko became the blood brother of Alija Džerzelez, because they had both dreamed the same dream and gone out into the world in search of one another. They met on a certain field, and from being bitter enemies became faithful blood brothers. Songs have been sung about this until the present day.

(i) Bašeskija, Mula Mustafa Ševki. **Ljetopis 1746-1804 (Annals 1746-1804)**, Sarajevo, 1968, p. 399. (Hereafter Bašeksija.) Živković M., op. cit., p. 34; Vilenjak, **Begova džamija u Sarajevu (The Beg's Mosque in Sarajevo)**, **Kalendar Novi Trebević II**, Sarajevo, 1893, p. 122; Skarić V., **Srpski pravoslavni narod i crkva u Sarajevu (The Orthodox Serbs and Their Church in Sarajevo)**, Sarajevo, 1928; also, **Sarajevo i njegova okolina (Sarajevo and Its Surroundings)**, Sarajevo, 1937, p. 56; Bjelokosić L. G., **Markova stopa, Karadžić I (Marko's Footprint, Karadžić I)**, Aleksinac, 1899, p. 96; Hörmann K., op. cit., pp. 594-595.

(ii) Kraljević Marko was the oldest son and heir of the Serbian king Vukašin. Insignificant and little known as a ruler, King Marko, a Turkish vassal, rapidly became extremely popular in South Slav legend and is the most beloved hero of the folk poems.

The Old Orthodox Church was, according to tradition, founded about the year 1530. However, the Serbian Orthodox community had a priest even earlier. It is difficult to believe that the Turks, after their final conquest of Bosnia, permitted the construction of any sort of new church. It is therefore thought that the Old Orthodox Church was built on the site of a much earlier Christian place of worship.



## VI. TURBES AND COLT GRAVES

### 54. The Turbe of the Seven (Jediler)

Of the **turbe** (mausoleum) of the Seven Brothers (**Jediler**) at Bistrik, some said that it contained the bodies of seven brothers who had been killed resisting the attack of Eugene of Savoy when he stormed into Bosnia. Others, however, believed that this was the **turbe** of seven dervishes who, though innocent, were put to death by Gazi Mustafa Daltaban Pasha for allegedly stealing money from the state treasury.

On the day when the robbery was committed, seven unknown dervishes happened to be in Sarajevo. When the crime was discovered, the seven were immediately arrested and, although they protested their innocence, the Pasha sentenced them to death. They were taken one by one to the scaffold and beheaded. To the last of them the Pasha said, »Admit that you stole the treasure and tell me where you have put it, and I will spare your life.« The dervish answered him that he, like the other six, was innocent and that the crime had been committed by certain merchants from Pljevlja, who were carrying the treasure hidden in oat sacks and fleeing towards Višegrad. The dervish accused the Pasha of being a great sinner because he had not been able

to see the angels catching the blood of his innocent companions in golden bowls—for they had been holy men. Having said this he submitted his head to the scimitar. The Pasha did indeed send men in pursuit of the thieves and caught them just as they were crossing the Drina by the bridge at Višegrad, on the frontier of the Bosnian province.

(i) Varatanović I., **Legenda i istorija o »turbetu sedmorice« u Sarajevu** (The Legend and the History of the »Turbe of the Seven« in Sarajevo), *Jugoslavenska pošta*, III, Sarajevo, 1931, No. 78, p. 15; Kadić R., **Legende o mističnim moćima sarajevskih grobova i turbeta** (Legends of the Mystic Powers of the Sarajevo Turbes), *Jugoslavenski list* XXIII, Sarajevo, 1940, No. 53, p. 9; Dizdar H., **Legende i istina o Jedilerima** (Legends and the Truth about the Jedilers), *Osvit*, II, Sarajevo, 1943, No. 82-83, p. 4; see also Djurđević M., **Memoari sa Balkana** (Balkan Memoirs), Sarajevo, 1910, p. 24.

(ii) According to heterodox Islamic belief, the Jedilers were seven **evlis** (holy men) who, like **krklers** (Forties) and **učlers** (Threes), represent a supernatural ruling spiritual hierarchy. No written documents exist concerning the origin of this **turbe**, and all that is known of it is of legendary origin. (Concerning graves and Cult Places in old Sarajevo, according to 1832 census, cf. POF, XXXI/1981, pp. 111-129.)

## 55. The Koštra Turbe

In the cemetery in Huremuša Street at Hrid there was a **turbe** (mausoleum) which



the local people had raised above the grave of a certain Husein Efendi. This was a wooden **turbe** in which above the **kubura** (a wooden burial casket usually covered with green cloth) there were two **nišans** (gravestones), without either carved turbans or inscriptions. The headstone was slightly hollowed at the top, and here women used to pour a little water. After saying their prayers they would take the water and use it as medicine. It was believed to be prophylactic against many illnesses.

The story goes that a man named Koštro set out on a journey and that he wished to bathe himself, as his religion prescribed. He reflected that, if he had not been a Moslem, he would not have had to perform this duty. Having thought this sinful thought, he dropped dead.

Now, there lived at the same time a daughter of the Viennese emperor named Koštra who considered herself a Moslem, although she concealed this. It happened that she died at the very same moment as this Efendi. Husein Efendi was buried, and the emperor's daughter was also buried, in Vienna, according to the Christian rite, together with all her jewels and valuables. But, the **kudret-deve** (two mythical camels which do God's will) took the body of Husein Efendi to Vienna and substituted it for the body of the girl Koštra.

One night some thieves went to open the grave of the emperor's daughter and steal the treasure. But when they opened the grave, they saw the dead Husein Efendi! The story spread from mouth to mouth and came finally to Sarajevo. People then went to open the

grave of Husein Efendi at Hrid, and found there a dead girl, the daughter of the Viennese emperor. That is why it was mainly women who gathered about the Koštra **turbe** and prayed for good health.

(i) Kemura S., op. cit., pp. 70-71; Hadžija-  
hić M., op. cit., p. 234.

(ii) A **turbe** stood at Hrid until 1939. Historical sources do not include reference to any Husein Efendi, i. e. Koštro, or to the period of the **turbe's** origin.

## 56. The Turbe at Vinograd

Together with the mosque at Vinograd, in the northern part of old Sarajevo, there is a modest wooden **turbe** (mausoleum) which the young men of the city used to visit in order to pray for the soul of the unknown man who lay beneath it. They believed that he would save them from being recruited into the Austro-Hungarian army into which they were, by law, compulsorily conscripted.

(i) Mujezinović M., **Islamska epigrafika u BiH I (Islamic Epigraphics in Bosnia and Herzegovina I)**, p. 449.

(ii) The **turbe** beside the mosque of Rogo-zade at Vinograd was erected relatively late, after the year 1600. Popular belief has it that its construction, as well as the settlement of this entire **mahala** (quarter), was attributable to newcomers from Hungary. The people believed that beneath that **turbe** and in the cemetery surrounding it certain clairvoyant people were buried.



## 57. The Urjan-dede Turbe

This is the **turbe** of a certain Urjan-dede, an old dervish. He came, it is said, with his brother to Bosnia together with the Sultan, Mehmed the Conqueror, and died in Sarajevo. It was believed that he did not like anyone to visit his tomb, he would become angry when his eternal rest was disturbed, so that the people nicknamed this **turbe** »the angry **turbe**.«

(i) Kadić R., op. cit., p. 9.

(ii) The Urjan-dede **turbe** is situated to the west of the mosque at Soukbunar, in the vicinity of the old Jewish Cemetery. It was destroyed in 1878, but was rebuilt in 1910 when a new **nišan**, with an inscription, was set up.

## 58. The Džebar-dede Turbe

This was situated not far from the Urjan-dede **turbe**, at the locality known as Šatorija. This was said to be the grave of Džebar-dede, a laughing **Nakšibend** dervish, soldier and **še-hid** in the army of the Conqueror, and brother to Urjan-dede. It was believed that joy would enter into the souls of those who visited this **turbe**, so that it became known as »the **turbe** of joy« at Piščivoda.

(i) Kadić R., op. cit., p. 9.

(ii) This **trube** was demolished before The Second World War. There exist no historical data concerning it.

## 59. The Turbes at Alifakovac

Amongst the old gravestones in the large Moslem cemetery on the hill of Alifakovac

there are two prominent identical **turbes**, each standing on four pillars. According to the story, they mark the graves of Jusuf Pasha Ćuprilić, an immigrant to Sarajevo who fled here and hid himself, and the son of the **kadija** (judge) Jahja. It was the custom to bury strangers and **musafirs** (visitors who died in the city) at Alifakovac.

(i) Mujezinović M., **Stari Alifakovac u Sarajevu (Old Alifakovac in Sarajevo)**, *Naše starine*, VIII, Sarajevo, 1962, pp. 131-132.

(ii) The **turbes** on Alifakovac date from the 18th century. One of them marks the grave of the above-mentioned son of an immigrant from Turkey (Jahja Efendi) who died 1779/1780. Beneath the other, under a smaller headstone, is buried Jusuf Pasha who, it was said, had been commander of the fortress at Tabriz, and had been sentenced to death, but who had fled to Sarajevo where he lived incognito. **Kadija** Jahja built this monument over his grave at the same time as he built that of his son. (Cf. also No. 32.)

## 60. The Grave of the Čelja Brothers

On the corner of the old streets of Magoda and Megara there was once a small mosque called Jakub Pasha **mesdžid**. Beside the mosque there was a cemetery including the graves of the Čelja brothers. According to the story, they lived at Čeljigovići, on the southeast side of Sarajevo, an area which took its name from them. The story went that there were seven Čelja brothers and that, at Čeljigovići, they had their own **tekija** (dervish mo-



nastery), for they were dervishes who devoted themselves exclusively to the service of God.

The oldest of the brothers was named Sulejman-dede, and he was the dervish sheik. It was said of him that once, just before he died, he wrote a letter to the Sultan in Istanbul, in which he predicted future events—that the »Russian« and the »German« would make peace and that this would cause great harm to the Turkish empire.

The headstones of the graves of Čelja brothers, it was said, were slightly indented at the top, and, when rainwater filled these indentations, women would come to pray and take the water in spoons, which they either drank or took home as »medicine« for various illnesses. But when there was a long drought, the women would themselves bring water, pour it into the indentations, and pray for rain.

(i) Kemura S., op. cit., p. 210; Nametak A., **Islamski kulturni spomenici turskog perioda (Islamic Cultural Monuments of the Turkish Period)**, Sarajevo, 1939, p. 26; Mujezinović M., **Islamska epigrafika I (Islamic Epigraphy I)**, p. 90.

(ii) The best known of these brothers was Ismail-Čelebi-dede, nicknamed Čeljo, who together with the others was buried beside the mosque of Jakub Pasha, known as Mago. The mosque and cemetery, together with the graves of the Čelja brothers, no longer exist. Only a single **nišan** is preserved, which unfortunately lacks an inscription, so that nothing more is known of these brothers.

## 61. The Grave of »Satiated« Nefa

In a cemetery above Bakija there was an unmarked and neglected grave where, according to legend, a certain »satiated« Nefa was buried. This grave was visited by those citizens who wanted to satisfy their »hungry eyes« and their curiosity by learning what fate had in store for them. But the old people of Sarajevo commented, with truth, that he is not to be pitied who has little, but he who desires much.

(i) Kadić R., op. cit., p. 9.

(ii) Nefisa Kadun, known as **Vaizikinja Bula**,<sup>1</sup> who was considered to be an **evli**, was buried in the Great Cemetery.

## 62. The Grave of »the Grandfather in the Thorns«

The grave known as »Grandfather in the Thorns« was also situated at the cemetery at Bakija. It was believed that even if someone cleaned the grave and freed it of thorn bushes, the next day it would again be overgrown so that the last resting place of the old man would not be disturbed. No one knew who that old man was, but people would visit the grave in times of long-lasting drought and pray for rain. May light shine on his grave!

(i) Kadić R., op. cit., p. 9.

(ii) Nothing more is known of this cult grave.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: a woman priest.



### 63. The Mardžan Kadun

There was once in Sarajevo a certain sheik named Mel who lived with his sister Hava Kadun,<sup>1</sup> who had a daughter named Merdžan Kadun. The daughter was married to a great drunkard who constantly beat her. But, it was said, Merdžan Kadun patiently suffered all; they say she would even wrap the stick with which her husband beat her in wool and soft cloth so that he would not blister his palm while using it on her. For this Merdžan Kadun became an **evli** (good, holy). For, it was said, a woman could become an **evli** in 40 days, while a man could not, not even in 40 years.

During the building of the walls around the old city on Vratnik, the following event occurred. When the people had gathered together and the stones had been brought for building the wall, the work at first went well. People passed the stones from hand to hand, while the masons, instead of mortar, mixed salt and eggs to make the wall stronger. But, at a certain spot on Ravne Bakije,<sup>2</sup> the wall simply would not stand. That which was built by day would collapse during the night. The chief mason then called an old **hodža** of whom it was said that he had second sight, and asked him why the wall in that place would not stand. The **hodža** answered, »It must be that an **evil** is buried in that place! If you fence that place, and take the wall around it, it won't fall down any more.« The builders did as he said and finished the building of the

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: »kaduna« = »lady.«

<sup>2</sup> Translators' note: »ravne« = »flat,« »level.«

wall without further trouble. They say that the grave in question was that of Merdžan Kadun.

(i) Traljić S., **Iz narodne tradicije muslimana (Popular Traditions of the Sarajevo Moslems)**, **Islamski svijet**, IV Sarajevo, 1935, No. 133, p. 6.

(ii) Merdžan Kadun of Sarajevo was a historical personage who died in the city in 1695/1696, according to the inscription on her gravestone. A variation of this story is preserved in the folk tale of a certain **ashab**, companion and follower of the Prophet, who often returned home angry and whose wife would leave a stick immediately beside the door so that it was ready to hand.

#### 64. The Karača Grave

In a cemetery above Kovači there was a grave where, it was said, a certain Karača was buried. He was, they say, a miracle worker, and for days before the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, it was rumoured in Sarajevo that Karača would save Bosnia from the »Schwab.« When the battle was at its height he would rise from his grave, and when the »Schwab« hordes came to Ali Pasha's mosque ten cannons would fire from each of his fingers and thus the enemy would be wiped out.

(i) Skarić V., **Sarajevo i njegova okolina (Sarajevo and Its Surroundings)**, p. 280.

(ii) Karača is a legendary figure of old Sarajevo whose grave, until recently, was located in the oldest part of the cemetery above Kovači Street. Legend has it that he came to Sa-



rajevo with the Conqueror; the historical sources do not mention him.

## 65. The Grave of the Yellow Hafiz

The **Sari** (Yellow) **hafiz**<sup>1</sup> was popularly believed to be an **evli**. His grave is still to be found in the Kovači cemetery, and it was believed that he who passed by the grave without uttering a prayer for the **hafiz's** soul would get pains in his legs. When this happened to a person, he should take a little earth, take it home and say a prayer over it, and the pains would pass. However, if that earth were not returned next day to the grave whence it was taken, it was believed that that person would have no peace until he did so.

There were many stories about the Yellow **hafiz**, but only a few are remembered. One of them relates that some jokers planned to have a little fun with the Yellow **hafiz**. They laid one of their number in a **tabut**, a lidless coffin, and called the Yellow **hafiz** to say the **dženaza**, the prayer for the dead, over him. The **hafiz** came and asked them, »Shall we say the prayer for a living or a dead man?« They apparently were surprised and answered, »Whoever said the **dženaza** for a living man? Say it for the dead!« — »And so he is,« said the **hafiz**. After the prayer had been said and the Yellow **hafiz** had gone, they unwound the grave clothes and in the **tabut** they found their comrade dead.

It was said that a certain woman lost some of her possessions when moving from one

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: a man who knows the entire **Kur'an** by heart.

house to another. Someone had stolen them. She went to the **hafiz's mezar** (grave) and took a little earth which she brought home. Around midnight a man entirely yellow, with a white beard, wearing a green **džubet** (priest's robe) appeared in her room and said, »Why don't you leave me in peace? The things you are looking for were stolen by the waggoners who moved your belongings!« And this indeed it was. And it was the Yellow **hafiz** who appeared to the woman, he of whom it was believed during his lifetime that he was clairvoyant, so that people would come to him with various requests.

A certain Čeljo was banished from Sarajevo because of his sins. He lived in exile and was almost reconciled to his fate. But, one day he saw the Yellow **hafiz** coming towards him along a street. Čeljo was filled with wonder and asked him, »What are you doing here, **hafiz**? Have you too been banished from Sarajevo?« At this the **hafiz** answered, »I've come for you, Čeljo, I've come to take you home. Stand on my toes and shut your eyes!« Čeljo did as he was told, and when the **hafiz** told him to open his eyes, he saw that he was no longer in exile but in the midst of Kovači, in Sarajevo. The **hafiz** went about his business, while Čeljo went back to his house at Čeljigovići.

(i) Traljić S., op. cit., p. 6.

(ii) The Yellow **hafiz** was a historical personage. His name was Hasan Efendi, and he was nicknamed »Yellow« because of the yellow color of his skin. During his life in Sarajevo he practiced medicine, and it was for this reason that his fellow citizens believed him to be



clairvoyant. According to one description he was eccentric, unmarried, and a friend of dervishes. He died in 1778/1779 and was buried in the cemetery at Nadkovači, where his gravestone with its inscription is still to be found today.

## 66. The Kajgusuz Grave

On Pirin Hill, in the area known as Medresa, there were two graves, those of Kajgusuz and his companion. These were the graves of two **bećars**<sup>1</sup> who, while they were still alive, said that, after their deaths, people would pass between them. And truly, the road which was later built, passed between their graves. It was believed that he who passed that way in the dead of night would have terrifying visions there.

(i) Kadić R., op. cit., p. 9.

(ii) A Kajgusuz was, according to Islamic belief, a godly man devoted to mysticism, a carefree religious bohemian, indifferent to the things of this world. The name is of Turkish origin formed from the word **kaygu** (anxiety, worry) and the suffix **suz** (without).

## 67. The Grave of Ali Ufaka

It was said and believed in old Sarajevo that a certain Ali Ufaka was buried in the cemetery on Alifakovac, this entire area of the city being thus named after him. He was said to have been a small man, so that they called him »little Alija,« or Ali Ufaka.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: a carefree, unmarried young man.

(i) Mujezinović M., **Stari Alifakovac (Old Alifakovac)**, p. 131.

(ii) Apparently his gravestone, without an inscription, still stands in the cemetery on Alifakovac. Above his sarcophagus two small **nišans** (gravestones) are placed very close to each other, as though to indicate that the dead man was indeed of small stature. There are no historical data concerning Ali Ufaka.

## 68. The Child's Grave in the Old Church

A certain widower lived in Sarajevo whose late wife had left him with a small male child. Since he had to travel very much on business, he decided to marry again so that he would have someone to look after his son and raise him while he was absent. He did this. One day, when he was away, the evil and jealous stepmother lost her temper with the poor child, whom she had already often maltreated. She seized him and threw him downstairs. The child was killed there and then.

One day when the child's grave was opened, it was found that the body had not decayed, that it was »whole,« so people began to believe that this innocent murdered child had become a saint! They then carried the body to the Old Church where it still lies.

(i) Pavlović L., **Kultovi lica kod Srba i Makedonaca (Serbian and Macedonian Cults of Individuals)**, Smederevo, 1965, p. 211.

(ii) Researchers into old Sarajevo and its past have not come across this well-known local legend, nor have they attempted to throw light on it. The notes of L. Pavlović, written before the opening of the coffin, contain a



number of errors. I assume that the legend cannot be older than the 18th century. In 1981 the coffin was opened and the well-preserved remains of an unknown child were found within, but without any other elements which could determine a sequence of events.

The grave is widely known in Sarajevo and its surroundings as a cult place which was visited by Orthodox (but not only Orthodox) women, especially barren women. During more important festivities, and especially on the so-called women's holidays, they crawled under the coffin and left gifts of money and in kind.

## VII. BENEFACTORS, WELL-KNOWN PERSONS AND DREAMERS

### 69. Abdi Čelebija

At the time when Evlija Čelebi was staying in Sarajevo, there lived in the city a certain Abdi Čelebija, a man chosen by God. By then he was already a feeble old man, who was always intoxicated with and carried away by his love for God, so that he appeared quite beside himself. He was acquainted with secret signs and the treasures of hidden knowledge, as Evlija Čelebi wrote, and his prophecies were fulfilled a thousand times. One day Abdi Čelebija went to the **čaršija** and entered the bazaar, and walked howling and crying.

»Take! Stuff into sasks! Stop! Hit! Quench! Don't stop! There goes Sarajevo! O, desert! Renewal! Morning wind! Hold! Stop!«

And—the wonder of it!—that night a fire broke out in the coppersmiths' **čaršija** and burned down several thousand shops and houses. A few days later the people tore to pieces the **subaša** (foreman) of Melek Ahmed Pasha because they had caught him breaking the law. The Pasha hanged or beheaded all those who participated in the killing. Next day Abdi Čelebija walked the streets saying,

»So, it was good, and some have become good **šehids**.«



Many other things are told of him, but we cannot mention them all.

## 70. **Deli Nisa Kadun**

Evlija also records that during his stay in Sarajevo, a certain Deli Nisa Kadun was said to be clairvoyant. Evlija wrote that she was given to revelation and dreaming, but that she was a good and modest woman. She would walk as though deaf and dumb.

(i) Čelebija E., **Putopis (Journies)**, pp. 130, 131.

(ii) No further details exist concerning either Abdi Čelebija or Deli Nisa Kadun. Since Evlija stayed in Sarajevo in 1660, they must have lived in the 17th century.

Fires plagued old Sarajevo. The **čaršija** frequently suffered from them, while almost the entire city was destroyed in the great fire of 1697. More than 20 serious fires were recorded in Sarajevo between 1460 and 1879.

## 71. **Hadži Abdija**

At the place on mount Trebević which, from time immemorial, has been called Knečinjac, there is a spring named after Hadži Abdija. Some say that he built, and some that he merely renovated, the waterworks in that part of the city, and that consequently the spring took his name.

It was said of Hadži Abdija that both he and his first wife, whom he survived, were great misers, so that he was able to build and repair the waterworks with the money they had saved, and thus to do good deeds. When he married again, his new wife one day bro-

ught him a pie for his lunch at Hambina Carina, where he was overseeing workers laying waterpipes. While he was eating, Hadži Abdija noticed that the pie was so greasy that it was almost disintegrating. He sighed and said, »No more will Hadži Abdija build **hajrats**,<sup>1</sup> or do good deeds.« His wife asked him, »What do you mean, my Hadži?« And he answered that his first wife, too, had used to bring him pies for lunch, but that her pies had been very little greasy, so much so that they could have been balanced on the tip of a stick.

This event was much talked about; but everything has an end, as this story too has an end.

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Vodovodi (Waterworks)**, p. 123.

(ii) Hadži Abdija Arakijadžija, the builder of the waterworks on the slopes of Trebević, after whom both a spring and a street, or rather the **mahala** of Hadžiabdinica, are named, was the son of Alija and lived in the **mahala** (quarter) of Hadži Mustafa Muslihudin beneath Trebević. In his endowment of 1704 he ordered that the waterworks should be repaired from their source down to Mjedenica Street. In his **mahala** he renovated the mosque which had been burned in the 1697 fire, and he repaired other fountains in that part of the city. Hadži Abdija died 1719/1720.

## 72. The Morić Brothers

Folk legend records that during the time of Turkish rule there lived in Sarajevo a wea-

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: a charitable institution.



lthy family named Morić, the best known of whose members were the brothers Mehmed and Ibrahim. The family tradition preserves the names of their father and mother, Mustafa Aga and Amina.

It was said that Amina had a brother who was a Pasha, and that one day he visited his sister in the old Morić house in the Vekil-harč **mahala**. On that occasion, it is said, he removed his scimitar, placed the scimitar cord on Mehmed and Ibrahim, and slapped Alija, the youngest of his nephews. When Amina asked what he was doing, he told her to be quiet and that he himself would bring the water from the spring at Toplika, which he did. Later, someone interpreted this to Amina as a prediction that her two eldest sons would be strangled with a silken cord, that Alija would die young, and that she would drink water to lighten the pain of her heart.

The Morić brothers were Sarajevo merchants and the leaders of a revolt against Turkish rule. They had a feud with the Halilbašić family, and it is said that their followers fought each other in the streets of Sarajevo as fiercely as two opposing armies. It was said that, until the beginning of this century, bullet holes could be seen in the doors of the Halilbašić house, dating from a time when the Morić gang had besieged it.

As the proverb says, when the arrow flies it never returns—the authorities grew weary of the Morić brothers. It was said that they were captured by a trick during their afternoon prayer in the Bakrbaba mosque at At-mejdan, which was situated near the Ćumurija bridge. Bound with chains, they were ta-

ken under guard through the **čaršija** and thrown into the dungeon of the Sarajevo fortress, where they were executed. As it is said—what goes up must come down. They met this fate because they had not been obedient to the Vizier, they had raised people in revolt and had done as they pleased, even declaring themselves leaders of Sarajevo.

It was said that the Morić brothers were great hooligans and drunkards, bullies and tyrants. They would sit opposite each other in the middle of the Šeherćehaja bridge, extending their long **čibuks** (tobacco pipes) so that the bowls touched. Sitting thus they would talk and smoke and not let anyone cross the bridge. It was said that they stole the produce of a garden and presented it to the caretakers of the mosque in their own **mahala**.

It was remembered and believed that at the moment when these two were strangled the earth shook for, it was said, God does not tolerate any form of violence and does not approve of it, even if it is justified.

According to an oral tradition which long circulated in Sarajevo, their mother Amina survived their execution—although folk poems say otherwise—and that she lived a long time after their deaths. It is said that, when she heard that her sons had been executed, she locked herself in her room and neither emerged from it, nor let anyone enter, nor ate, nor drank, for seven days. She wished to starve to death. But, when the eighth day dawned, she emerged from the room and said to her daughters-in-law, »Hunger conquers even sorrow!«



After their deaths this period was long remembered by the people of Sarajevo as »the time of the Morićes,« or as »the time when the Morić brothers revolted.« The story goes that the Pasha's hill, to the north of the old city, acquired its name from Mehmed Pasha Morić. Even today people remember that their graves are to be found in the courtyard of the Vekil-harč mosque beneath Alifakovac. In the wall of the courtyard there is a plaque with the following inscription:

For the famous and beloved Morić  
brothers,  
Hadži Mehmed and Ibrahim Aga,  
The wind of death suddenly blew  
And destroyed them in an instant.  
It left their mother in great sorrow  
and pain.

May the Lord receive them  
mercifully.

This chronogram is written in a single  
sigh:

Let them be long remembered as  
martyrs.

1170 (1757)

(i) Marunović I., **Narodne pjesme po Herceg-Bosni (Folk Poems in Herzeg-Bosnia)**, Zadar, 1906, pp. 14-15; Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije (Sarajevo Mosques)**, GZM, XXII, pp. 103-104; Bašeskija E., **Ljetopis (Annals)**, pp. 31-35; Kreševljaković H., **Morići—prilog povijesti Sarajeva (The Morić Brothers: A Contribution to the History of Sarajevo)**, Novi Behtar, XII, Sarajevo, 1938-1939, No. 1-4, pp. 3-29; Krnjević H., **Usmene balade Bosne i Hercegovine (Oral Folk Ballads of Bosnia and Herze-**

govina), Sarajevo, 1973, pp. 255, 353, 495; Mujezinović M., **Islamska epigrafika I (Islamic Epigraphics I)**, pp. 340-341.

(ii) Memories of the Morić brother and their execution survive in Sarajevo even today. It seems that the credit for this should be given, in the first place, to the oral ballad (recorded in various versions, composed on the themes of their mother's efforts to free them and save their lives, and her own death upon the bodies of her dead sons.

There is an obvious inconsistency between the lyrical, tragedy-filled ballad, and the oral narrative traditions concerning the Morić brothers. While the eight-syllabled lines of the popular folk poem picture them as unjustly condemned leaders of local resistance to foreign rule, and as defenders of the poor, the fragments of the prose tradition and surviving memoirs present them as unruly hooligans and tyrants.

The Morić brothers were members of an old Sarajevo family of Agas and officers of the janissary corps. After ten years of rioting and unrest in Bosnia, and especially in Sarajevo, they were executed in March 1757 together with 20 of their followers. The memorial plaque with its inscription, which records their violent death, is preserved in the courtyard of the Vekil-harč mosque, in the vicinity of the house in which they lived.

### **73. It Is Sometimes Good to Be Nothing and Nobody**

Once, long ago, in a hovel somewhere under Trebević, there lived a certain poor **hamal**



(porter). He had nothing but a wife and was barely able to make ends meet.

One night, as he was sleeping with his wife, he was awoken by gunfire from the bastion. His wife too woke up and, terrified, asked him, »What's that? Why is the cannon firing at this time of night?« »You know, wife,« answered the porter, »there was a rebellion these days in Sarajevo. The Agas and Begs and other gentry rose against the emperor, but they were captured, thrown into the dungeon and sentenced to death. Yesterday, the emperor's **kapidži-baša**<sup>1</sup> arrived from Stamboul and brought a silken cord for each of the condemned to be strangled with. The executioners are, even at this moment, separating their spirits from their bodies, and the gun at the fortress is firing for each of them—the cannon fires as each soul leaves its body.« His wife asked, »And who are they, God pity their poor mothers?« The porter answered, »They are all leading men of Sarajevo—the Morićes, Hadži Pasha and his brother Ibrahim, Hajdar Pasha, and others.«

His wife was silent, deep in thought, then, pulling the quilt over herself and her husband, said, »Thank God you are nothing and nobody.«

(i) This short story was well-known amongst older citizens of Sarajevo, and was often told in association with the story of the execution of the Morić brothers and the other rebels. Cf. Tahmišćić H., **Poezija Sarajeva (Poetry of Sarajevo)**, Sarajevo, 1968, p. 87.

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: officer of the palace guard.

(ii) This story pictures the events of the turbulent years 1757-1758, and reflects the insecurity felt by the citizens whenever they contemplated any resistance to Osmanli rule.

#### 74. **Mišćo, the Women's Tailor**

In a **mahala** near Ploča, above Kovači, there lived a certain Mehmed, son of Jusuf, known as Mišćija, or Mišćo, a **belukčija**, i. e. a tailor who made women's articles of clothing (boleroes, cardigan vests, and so forth). He was a well-known muezzin at the Kebkebir mosque who every morning at dawn recited the prayer from the minaret waking, it was said, the entire town. He became famous for this in old Sarajevo, which is evidenced by the fact that the mosque of Kebkebir Hadži Ahmet, at which Mišćo was muezzin until his old age, is known as Mišćina mosque. The **mahala** (quarter) too acquired his name. Thus, a powerful voice may also be one's gift to posterity.

(i) Bašeskija, op. cit., p. 338; Mujezinović M., **Islamska epigrafika I (Islamic Epigraphics I)**, pp. 273-274.

(ii) Mehmed, known as Mišćija, lived in the 18th century and died in Sarajevo 1786/87. It is said of a large grave in the Great Cemetery above Kovači, exactly opposite the Mišćina mosque, that it marks the resting place of this famous Sarajevo muezzin. The grave consists of two small **nišans** (gravestones) of green gypsum, with no inscription.

#### 75. **Moše (Moshe) Danon**

Moshe Danon is remembered in the tradition of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Sephardic



Jews for his godliness and righteousness and for the fact that by some miracle, as the story goes, he succeeded in saving the Jewish hostages whom Rudži Pasha had imprisoned and had already sentenced to death. Moshe Danon is buried near Stolac, where the Sarajevo Jewish community raised a monument to him. Every year in October (on the 4th of Marheshvan according to the Jewish calendar) the Sarajevo Jews would make pilgrimage to his grave and commemorate the memory of the rabbi Moshe Danon and his good deeds.

(i) Levy M., **Die Sephardim in Bosnien**, Sarajevo, 1911, p. 81; Rizvanbegović I., **Stari jevrejski nadgrobni spomenici ka Krajšini kraj Stoca (Old Jewish Gravestones on the Way to Krajšina near Stolac)**, **Naše starine III**, Sarajevo, 1956, pp. 265-267.

(ii) The origin of this Jewish tradition is a historical event. At the beginning of the 19th century a certain Moše Havijo, a member of the Sarajevo Jewish community, converted to Islam in Travnik, taking the name Ahmed and ingratiating himself with the dervishes. For a time he practiced foretelling the future and the curing of various illnesses, but suddenly he disappeared. The Bosnian **valija** (governor), Rudži Pasha, accused the Sarajevo Jews of being responsible for Havijo's disappearance, but his real purpose was to hold the Jews to ransom and in this way acquire some money. To this end he imprisoned the Sarajevo Chief Rabbi, Moshe Danon, and ten of his colleagues. When word spread that these had already been condemned to death, a distinguished Sarajevo citizen named Ali Asaka raised the already dissatisfied leading citizens of Sa-



rajevo in revolt against Ruždi Pasha, whom they in any case despised. They broke into the prison and freed the hostages, while the Pasha fled from Sarajevo back to Travnik.

Moshe Danon donated the ransom money that had been collected towards the completion of the Jewish synagogue in Sarajevo (1822). Before his death Moshe Danon left for Jerusalem, but died on his way there (1815).

## 76. **Hadži Dervish Halač**

One winter day, in his shop in Halači Street in the Bašćaršija, Hadži Dervish, a **halač**, was beginning his everyday work, carding cotton and wool and filling quilts, vests and winter embroidered jackets. All of a sudden a man came to his shop and begged for a little money. Although reluctantly, the Hadži silently gave him a groschen, and the stranger thanked him and went his way. They say that from the moment of this meeting with the beggar, Hadži Dervish began to get rich. After a while he gave up his business and began to trade and invest money in real estate. He used his money to pay for the renovation of the Buzadžija mosque. Concerning this, the following story is told.

One evening a Sarajevo **mualim**, a children's religious instructor, naedn Mehmed Ramić, was walking past the Buzadžija mosque when he heard an argument between rich citizens about the contribution they should make towards the renovation of the mosque. That same night Ramić dreamed that in front of the Buzadžija mosque places in paradise were been allocated and that Hadži Dervish



earned one. In the morning Ramić went to see Hadži Dervish and told him what he had dreamed. Hadži Dervish Halač immediately decided that he alone, and no one else, would contribute the money needed for the renovation of the mosque. In this way, the story goes, the mosque was repaired.

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Sarajevo u doba okupacije Bosne 1878 godine (Sarajevo and the 1878 Occupation)**, Sarajevo, 1937, p. 93.

(ii) Hadži Dervish Halač is a historical personage. He began as a modest Sarajevo craftsman and, in the middle of the last century, he became wealthy through trading and buying houses and land. He died in 1876 and is buried in the cemetery beside the Buzadžija mosque. His descendants still live in Sarajevo.

## 77. The Luckless One

It is said that a certain Mustafa, who lived on the far side of the river Miljacka at Čeljigovići, was servant to Mustaj Beg Babić. Every evening he would leave Mustaj Beg's **konak** (mansion), cross the Šehercéhaja bridge, and go home to sleep, returning next morning early to the mansion. He was a good man, but clumsy and awkward, so often excused himself by saying that he was luckless. Mustaj Beg liked him very much, and one morning ordered his servants to take a bag of money to the bridge and to make sure that no one else but Mustafa took the money. When Mustafa appeared on the bridge, he walked past the bag but did not pick it up. The Beg summoned him and asked, »How was your

crossing of the bridge this morning, Mustafa?«  
»My Beg, I have always wondered how a blind man feels when he crosses a bridge, so this morning when I reached the bridge I shut my eyes and, keeping them tight shut, I crossed it.«

Then Mustaj Beg saw clearly that Mustafa was indeed luckless, for it is not said in vain, »Give me birth, mother, without anything else, but not without luck!«

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Vodovodi (Waterworks)**, pp. 205-206.

(ii) Mustaj Beg Babić, the son of the Sarajevo **muselim**<sup>1</sup> Omer Beg, a member of a wealthy and distinguished Sarajevo family of Bosnian **zaims** and **alajbegs** (landowners) which originated from Glasinac, became Bosnian Alaj Beg in 1835. Part of his mansion still stands at the former Mejdan in the vicinity of the Šehercéhaja bridge. Mustaj Beg renovated part of this bridge in 1843, as is recorded by an inscription carved in the base of one of the piers. The memory of this Sarajevo family is also preserved in the name of a quarter of the old city, **Babića bašća**.

## 78. It's a Long Time till Morning

Once long ago there was a vizier in Sarajevo, whose habit it was to gaze from his window through binoculars to see if he could spot somebody's beautiful wife. And so, one day he did notice the beautiful wife of a certain **tabudžija** (coffin maker), and sent his

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<sup>1</sup> Translators' note: administrative deputy of Pasha.



servant to fetch her, to make her his own. But the coffin maker's wife told the girl that she had her own man and did not wish to go to the vizier. The vizier became angry and told his **muhur-sahibija** (keeper of the imperial seal) to kill the coffin maker. But the **muhur-sahibija** answered that he could not kill a man for no reason. Then the vizier began to invent a reason. Finally he sent a servant to call the coffin maker to him, and ordered the latter to collect a hundred okes of **talaš** (wood shaving) in a single night and bring them to him. When the coffin maker heard this, he was frightened, so he shut his shop and, very worried, went home.

When he arrived home, his wife noticed that he was **kaharli** (unhappy), so she asked him what was wrong. He told her what the vizier had ordered. But his wife answered, »Why are you frightened? A single night is long!« She called him to the supper table, but he was unable to eat. His wife kept telling him not to worry, that it was a long time till morning, but without effect—he could not eat. After supper his wife lay down to sleep and called him to bed, but he, again, said that he could not sleep and remained sitting in his chair all night. An hour before dawn, someone knocked on the outer door. The coffin maker got up to open it, but first asked who was there. A voice answered, »I am the vizier's boy!« The coffin maker quietly swore to himself and thought, »Why doesn't he at least wait until it is light?« He opened the door and asked the boy, »What do you want?« The boy answered, »The vizier is dead. They have sent me to order a coffin for this evening.« The

coffin maker hastily ran into his shop, and by the evening he had made the vizier's coffin.

(i) Tahmišćić H., **Poezija Sarajeva (Poetry of Sarajevo)**, p. 80; Čajkanović V., **Srpske narodne pripovetke (Serbian Folk Tales)**, Beograd, 1927, p. 371.

(ii) The story is practically identical with a Turkish folk tale of an emperor, a carpenter and his wife. Two versions are known in Turkey, and there is also a story of an emperor, a smith (**nalcioglu**) and his beautiful wife on the same theme. Cf. Eberhard-Boratav, **Tipovi turskih narodnih priča (Types of Turkish Folk Tale)**, p. 314.



## VIII. MYTHICAL BEINGS, MYSTICAL OCCURRENCES AND OTHER BELIEFS

### 79. **Krkleri**

It was believed that he who wished to see the holy ones should go to Obhodža, on the eastern fringe of Sarajevo, or to the grave of any **šehid** (martyr) or godly man and there offer up a prayer for the incumbent's soul. Then the **Krkleri** (the forty holy ones) would appear to him swathed in green robes hurrying, one after another, to the dawn prayer.

(i) Kemura S., **Sarajevske džamije (Sarajevo Mosques)**, p. 210.

(ii) Like the **Jedilers**, according to heterodox Islamic belief, the **Krklers** too belonged to a reigning spiritual hierarchy. Visits to cult graves, deserted and »shadowy« places were, in the folk belief, preconditions for meetings with supernatural beings.

### 80. **The Dervish and the Šehid**

It was said that, for almost forty years, a certain Sarajevo dervish every day in passing the small **Gaziler turbe** (mausoleum) would pause and say a prayer for the souls of the two fallen heroes. But, one night, as he was returning home together with his wife, he neglected to do this, and did not pause to pray. A little further on, towards Gorica, he suddenly

saw a tall apparition wrapped in a green cloak which approached him and slapped him hard. »Shame on you,« the figure cried, »would you pass thus beside my grave, is your wife more important to you than I?« According to the belief of the time, this was one of the two **šehids** who were buried beneath the Gaziler turbe.

(i) Kadić R., op. cit., p. 9.

(ii) The belief that it was possible to offend and anger the souls of the dead by not showing them due respect is very old, one is still to be found today in backward parts of the world.

## 81. **Shaitans**

The story is also told that shaitans (devils) would spend the night in the Sarajevo hammams and baths. This was believed in particular of the Ramić's bath from which, they say, shaitans could be heard at night screaming, cackling and crying, so that people avoided walking there late. It is said that the shaitans appeared to many citizens on the streets or in their dreams. This is recorded by an annalist of old Sarajevo.

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Banje u Bosni i Hercegovini (Baths in Bosnia and Herzegovina)**, Sarajevo, 1952, pp. 65-69.

(ii) The chronicler Mula Mustafa Bašeskija has left a vivid picture of the shaitans which were supposed to have shown themselves to various individuals.



## 82. Genies

According to the old superstitions, genies were similar to shaitans, but could enter into a man and drive him mad. It is recorded that, in old Sarajevo, a genie possessed a woman and would from time to time speak through her. There were also people who knew how to use magic to exorcize genies, so this woman was brought to a well-known Sarajevo exorcist. This man had a ring, a sort of talisman which, when he threw it, would, at his request, attract or disperse genies. The exorcist put his ring into the hand of the woman and, as the chronicler records, at that same moment the genie began to howl, while the woman suddenly started to talk sensibly, and very soon completely recovered.

(i) Bašeskija, **Ljetopis (Annals)**, p. 314.

(ii) The above-mentioned chronicler has left us a fascinating record concerning genies which ignorant people believed in at that time (18th century) in old Sarajevo.

## 83. The Miracle-Working Spring

Brezumulja is the name of an unusual spring at Dol on Vratnik. In the spring the water would run clear in the morning, while it would dry up around noon. The source was, they say, situated beneath the **mihrab** (niche) of the neighboring mosque, while it emerged at the nearby Kupus fountain. It was believed that for forty days before Jurjevo (St. George's Day) it was good to drink the water before dawn, for it was believed it was medicinal for various sicknesses, and especially for infants who were unable to walk.

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Vodovodi (Waterworks)**, pp. 69-70.

(ii) The cult spring of Brezumulja was very likely an object of superstition before the mosque and its **mihrab** were built above it. Hadži Hasan Nežić (Než-zade) built this mosque before 1602 in the **mahala** (quarter) of the same name. Erratic springs, flowing particularly strongly in the springtime when the snows melt, are a frequent occurrence in the Yugoslav karst.

#### 84. Folk Medicine

In the wooden troughs in front of some old Sarajevo public fountains, hollows were to be found where the water from the fountain fell. Superstitious people would cut from those hollows pieces of wood which they would carry about their persons as talismans. This was especially done by those who suffered from heart ailments, particularly from palpitations. Once a woman was cutting with her knife a piece of wood from the fountain in Strošići, when a passer-by asked her what she was doing. She retorted, »This **iladž** (medicine) will be quicker than your question!« It was believed that one should not ask the purpose of something if it was to serve as medicine.

(i) Kreševljaković H., op. cit., p. 81.

(ii) Although the above is an example of a superstition related to folk medicine, I quote it here to illustrate the close connection between the oral tradition and beliefs and superstitions.



## 85. An 1878 Prediction

Immediately before the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer of 1878, there was, it is said, a plague of woodworm in Sarajevo which destroyed all the leaves of the plum trees. There were so many of them that they began to spread cobwebs all over the gardens and the grass, so that the trees looked as though they had blossomed. The cobwebs finally spread into the yards of the houses, into the eaves, the anterooms and the porches, so that some people had to abandon their houses and move elsewhere. In short, something like this happens once every five hundred years, though there are similar occurrences that happen once in a thousand years.

Dervish Efendi Goraždak, one of the great opponents of the Austrians, and the leader of the resistance to the »Schwab« occupation, interpreted this plague as an omen of the terrible misfortune about to occur: that the »Schwab« would win. At this prediction of his the whole of Sarajevo was in panic.

(i) Kreševljaković H., **Sarajevo u doba okupacije Bosne 1878 godine (Sarajevo and the 1878 Occupation)**, p. 10.

(ii) Unusual occurrences, such as earthquakes, sudden thunderstorms, epidemics or, as is here the case, plagues of worms, were in popular belief omens of decisive events or great nation-wide misfortunes.

## IX. A FAREWELL STORY

The story used to be told that, in 1816, a Turkish official came from Istanbul to Sarajevo to repair and extend the walls of the Sarajevo fortress and construct bastions. The people were obliged to bring stones for the walls and towers as well as to perform other laborious work.

This official lived outside the city in a tent where he would sit and enjoy the view of Sarajevo. One day he heard the sound of a drum and singing from the Goat's bridge, and asked his servant, »What is that?« He was told that people were bringing a bride from some god-forsaken place in order to marry her off in Sarajevo. The official ordered his servants to meet the wedding procession and to ask the bride to send him a gold-embroidered kerchief.

A little later, as he sat before his tent, this Stamboul man again heard singing and drumming, so he asked again, »What's that now?« His servant told him that a wedding party was taking a girl from Sarajevo in order to marry her off in some distant and god-forsaken place. At this the official took from his pocket a fistful of ducats and ordered his servants, »Go quickly to the road and give these ducats to the bride!« His servants asked him, »Why did you ask the first bride to send you



a gold-embroidered kerchief, while to this one you send a fistful of ducats?» The man answered them:

»That first bride was happy because they were bringing her from a small god-forsaken village to a big town, and that is why I asked her for a kerchief. But this second is unhappy and sad because she is parting with her native Sarajevo—leaving a great town for a distant god-forsaken village! That is why I am sending her these ducats.«





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